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THE
WORKS

OF
M. DE LA BRUYERE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

To which is added the
CHARACTERS

OF
THEOPHRASTUS.

ALSO
THE MANNER OF LIVING WITH GREAT MEN;
WRITTEN AFTER THE MANNER OF BRUYERE,
By N. ROWE, Esq.

*Admonere volumus, non mordere: prodesse non ledere: consulere
moribus hominum, non officere.* ERASM.

VOLUME THE SECOND.

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C O N T E N T S

O F

VOLUME SECOND.

	Page
O F Judgments.	1
Of the Fashion.	40
Of Custom.	64
Of the Pulpit:	92
Of Libertines.	107

Prefatory Discourse on Theophrastus.	145
Introduction to the Characters of Theophrastus.	165
Diffimulation.	167
Flattery.	168
Impertinence.	171
Rusticity.	172
Wheedling.	174
Profligate.	176
Loquacity.	177
The Newsmonger.	179
Impudence, as the Effect of Covetousness.	181
Avarice.	182
The Shameless Fellow.	183

CONTENTS.

	Page
Unseasonable Conversation. - - -	185
The Busybody. - - -	187
The Absent Man. - - -	188
Brutality. - - -	189
Superstition. - - -	190
Discontent. - - -	191
Distrust. - - -	192
The Sloven. - - -	193
A Troublesome Fellow. - - -	194
Vain-glory. - - -	195
The Niggard. - - -	196
Ostentation. - - -	197
Pride. - - -	199
Cowardice. - - -	200
An Oligarchist. - - -	201
Of Accomplishments, acquired too late. - -	202
Slander. - - -	203
Preface to M. Bruyere's Speech upon his Admission into the French Academy. }	207
M. Bruyere's Speech to the French Academy.	223
The Manner of Living with Great Men. - -	241



T H E
C H A R A C T E R S,

O R,
MANNERS OF THE AGE.

OF JUDGMENTS.

NOTHING more nearly resembles a strong conviction than an obstinate conceit; whence proceed parties, cabals, and heresies.

Our thoughts on the same subject are not always the same: conceit and disgust follow one another very closely.

Great things astonish, and small dishearten us: custom makes both familiar.

Two contrarieties equally affect us, custom and novelty.

There is nothing so mean and so truly vulgar as to sound the praise of those very persons of whom we thought but indifferently before their promotion.

A prince's favour neither excludes nor includes merit.

VOL. II.

A



It is surprising that, with all the swell of pride with which we are inflated, and the high opinion we have of our own Judgment, we neglect to make use of it in speaking of other people's merit: the common vogue, popular favour, or the prince's fancy, bear us down like a torrent: we extol rather what is praised than what is praiseworthy.

I doubt whether any thing is approved with more reluctance, and praised so sparingly, as what most deserves to be praised and approved; and whether virtue, merit, beauty, good actions, and the best writings, make their way to the heart so forcibly as envy, jealousy, or antipathy. 'Tis not of a saint that a Tartuffe speaks well, but of a brother Tartuffe. If a handsome woman allows another to have beauty, you may certainly conclude she excels her; or if a poet praises another's verses, it is an even wager that they are flat and spiritless.

Men do not easily like one another; they have a backwardness to reciprocation of applauses. The actions, economy, thoughts, and expressions of others are faulty, nothing contents; they substitute in the place of what others recite, speak or write, what they would have done in such a juncture, what they think or have written upon such a subject, and are so full of their own ideas, that they have no room for any other.

The generality are so inclined to dissoluteness and levity, and the world is so full of examples, either pernicious or ridiculous, that



I should be apt to believe singularity, could it keep within bounds, would be a very near approximation to right reason and a commendable conduct.

We must do like other men: a dangerous maxim; for the most part signifying we must do ill, if you carry it beyond things external, and of no consequence, but depending on custom, Fashion, or ceremony.

If men were not more like bears and panthers than men; if they were equitable, if they were just to themselves and others, what would become of the law, of the intricate text, and the voluminous commentaries? where would you find plaintiff and defendant? to what would even they be reduced who owe all their affluence and grandeur to the authority with which they are invested for informing these laws? If men were honest, candid, and unprejudiced, whither would the wrangles of the schools and bar vanish? if they were temperate, chaste, and moderate, what occasion for the mysterious jargon of physic, which is a golden mine to such as take upon them to speak it? O Lawyers, Professors, and Physicians, terrible would be your fall, could we agree to become wise!

How many great men, in the different exercises of peace and war, ought to have been without employment! to what exquisiteness and perfection are several arts and sciences brought, which, so far from being naturally necessary, were introduced into the world only as reme-

dies to those evils of which our malignity is the only source !

How many things are there since Varro, of which Varro was ignorant ! Such a knowledge only as that of Plato and Socrates, it seems, would not suffice us.

It is no uncommon thing at a sermon, a concert, or in a gallery of pictures, to hear praise and censure, and, upon the very identical subject, quite opposite sentiments ; this makes me conclude the risk is not great to publish any thing, good or bad ; the good pleases some, the bad others ; and, I dare say, the very worst will not want its admirers.

The Phoenix* of musical poetry rose out of his own ashes, and in one and the same day saw both the dissolution and resurrection of his reputation ; and that same infallible judge, who is ever so obstinate, (I mean the public), was pleased to change upon his account, and either was or is now in an error. He who now should say that Quinaut was a bad poet, would be thought no less impertinent than he who had formerly said he was a good one.

Chapelain was rich, Corneille was not ; La Pucelle and Rodugune† merited a different fate : so it has always been a question why, in this or that profession, one has made his fortune and another failed ? For the reason of this mankind must inform themselves from

* M. Quinaut, Auditor of Accounts, whose chief talents lay in operas.

† Two poems.

their own capriciousness; whereby, in the most interesting conjunctures, either of their pleasure, health, or affairs, they often leave the best, and take the worst.

The profession of a comedian amongst the Romans was infamous, among the Greeks honourable: what is it with us? We think of them like the Romans, and live with them like the Greeks.

It was sufficient for Bathyllus to be an universal mimic, to be courted by the Roman ladies; for Rhoe to dance on the stage, or for Roscia and Nerina to sing in the chorus, to engage a crowd of lovers. Vanity and impudence, the consequences of too great power, made the Romans lose the gust of secret pleasures; they were fond of deriving their amours from the Theatre, without any jealousy of the audience; they did not disdain to share the charms of their mistresses with the multitude; their pride lay in showing they loved not a beauty, or a good actress, but an actress*.

Nothing better manifests the regard paid to the sciences and literature, and men's sense of their utility to the public, than the recompences assigned to them, and the repute in which they stand who excel in them.

There is no art so mechanic and mean that is not a quicker and surer way to wealth. The actor lolling in his coach bespatters the face of Corneille walking a-foot. With many, learning and pedantry are synonymous.

* Madame Dancourt.

Often when the rich man speaks, and though he speaks of learning, the learned man must be silent, listen and applaud; at least if he would not pass for something else besides learned.

A sort of courage is required in the company of some Goths and Vandals to vindicate the learned: you find there a settled prejudice against them: they know not the world, say these intelligent persons, nor how to live, neither have they any genius for society, and so confine them to their study, or the company of such as themselves. As ignorance is an easy condition, without any labour or application, most of the world embrace it, and their majority in court, city, and country, infinitely overpowers the men of letters. If they allege in their favour the names of Estrée, Harlay, Bossuet, Seguier, Montausier, Vardes, Chevreuse, Novion, La Moignon, Scudery, Pellisson, and of many other persons equally learned and polite; nay, if to these they add the great names of Chartres, Condé, Conti, Bourbon, Maine, Vandome, as princes who to the most solid sciences add Grecian atticism and Roman politeness, the answer immediately is, these are singular examples; if from example they have recourse to reasonings, alas! they are drowned in a laugh: however, methinks, with submission to the public, it is too precipitate in its decision, and should at least take the pains to investigate whether that genius that makes such a progress in knowledge, which thinks, judges, speaks, and writes, with such delicate

solidity, is not of use towards polite accomplishments.

A man of little sense may perfectly refine his carriage, but a great deal is required to the refinement of his mind.

Such a one is learned, says the politician, consequently not fit for business, I would not trust him with the management of my wardrobe; and to be sure he is in the right. Ossat, Ximenes, Richlieu, were learned, were they men of ability? were they accounted good ministers? He understands Greek; then, says the statesman, he is a book wit, a philosopher, for he spoke Greek, and in its purity. What a whim, what a strange revery, was it in the great, the wise and judicious, Antonine to say, "that the people would then be happy, when the Emperor philosophized, or the philosopher, that is, the book wit, governed!"

Languages are no more than the keys of sciences; he that despises the one slight the other. It is of no importance whether languages are ancient or modern, dead or living, but whether they are barbarous or polite, whether the books they afford are good or bad. Suppose the French should meet with the fortune of the Greek or Roman tongues, must then he be a pedant who should read Moliere or La Fontaine some ages after the French had ceased to be a living language?

If I talk of Euripilus, you say he is a wit; you also call him a carpenter who lays a floor, and he that builds a wall a bricklayer. But

I would ask you where is this wit's workhouse? what sign has his shop, and by what marks shall we know him? what are his tools? a hatchet, a chissel, a hammer and anvil? where does he finish his work? where does he expose it to sale? An artificer values himself upon being a workman. Does Euripilus set up for a wit? If he does, I suppose he is a coxcomb, he prostitutes wit; nothing agreeable or fine can dwell with such infatuation; but if he pretends to nothing, I understand you, then he is a sensible and ingenious man. Do not you also bestow the title of Wit on every poetaster, or Doctor on every smatterer in learning? Do you believe of yourself that you have no wit? If you have any, without doubt it is of the most delicate sort; yet should a man call you a Wit, would you not take it for an affront? However, I will give you leave to call Euripilus so; let the irony tickle the silly and unlettered, as an equipoise to those solid qualifications which they admire in others, and of which they themselves have not a single spark.

Speak no more of pen, ink, or paper; no more of style, printer, or press: for God's sake don't vex me any more with, Antisthenes*, you write well. Proceed, shall we never see a folio of your's? Treat of all the virtues and vices in one work, well connected, methodical, without end, (and they should add) without sale too. I renounce every thing that either

was, is, or ever will be, a book. The sight of a book throws me into a swoon as much as a cat does Beryllus. Am I better fed, or warmer clothed, am I more conveniently lodged, have I so much as a feather-bed, after being exposed to sale these twenty years? You say that my name is up, I am much talked of; say rather, I am very rich in uselefs air: but have I one grain of that metal which procures all things? The scoundrel pettifogger lengthens his bill, is paid charges which he never was at, and has for his son-in-law a count or a judge. A lacquey is made a commissioner, and, in a little time growing rich, out-tops his master, and buys a title. B . . . * enriches himself by a puppet-show; B. B . . . by selling river for mineral waters; another mountebank footed it to Town with his wallet at his back, and leaves it in his coach and six. Mercury is mercury, and nothing more; and gold not being an adequate reward for his meditations and intrigues, they reward him with favour and distinction. To confine myself to lawful profits: you pay the tiler for his tiles, and the workman for his time and labour; do you pay an author for his thoughts and writings? If they are excellent, do you pay him suitably? does he enrich or ennoble himself by the produce of his genius? Men indeed must be clothed and shaved, have houses with doors that shut close; where is the

* Benvit, who got an estate by showing waxwork. Cassetti, who enriched himself by nostrums, which he sold very dear.

necessity of so much instruction? It were folly, simplicity, and weakness, continues Antisthenes, to set up for an author or philosopher; place me in a warm employment, which would enable me to lend my friend, and give to those that can never return; to write by way of amusement to fill up a vacant hour, as Tytirus whistles or plays upon his flute; on these terms or none will I put pen to paper; then I am at the service of those who now throttle me, and cry out, You shall write: I have the title of my first book ready for them, *Of Beauty, Goodness, Ideas, of the first Principles*, by *Antisthenes, the Fishmonger*.

If ambassadors* of foreign princes were apes, who had learnt to walk on their hind legs, and to make themselves understood by interpreters, it could not surprise us more than the solidity of their answers, and the efflorescence of wit and sagacity which abound in their common discourse. Our prepossession in favour of our country, joined to a national pride, makes us forget that reason is the growth of all climates, and that a justness of sentiment is not limited to a part of Europe. It would enrage us to be so treated by those whom we are pleased to call *Barbarians*; if amongst us there is any barbarism, it is in being amazed at hearing other people reason like ourselves.

All strangers are not barbarians, nor are our countrymen all civilized; in like manner, all

* Those of Siam.

the whole country is not wild, nor all a city polite : there is in Europe a certain place, part of a maritime province in a great kingdom, where the villagers are mild and tractable, and their townsmen and magistrates furly, and of an hereditary rusticity.

With all the purity of speech, spruceness of drefs, and elegance of manners, with such good laws, and such fair complexions, we are barbarians to some sort of people.

If we should hear it reported of the Eastern people, that their usual drink is a liquor which flies up into the head, makes them mad, and sets them a-vomiting, we should be apt to lift up our hands, and say, These sottish barbarians !

This bishop * seldom comes to Court, lives retired, never visits among women, forbears games of all sorts, is never seen at feasts and shows, avoids cabals, and has dropt the spirit of intrigue ; blessed change ! now he resides in his diocese, and gives himself up to instruct his people by frequent sermons and private discourse, and edify them by his shining example ; exhausts his riches in charity, and macerates his body in devout austerities ; he is a perfect transcript of the zeal and piety of the Apostles. Times are changed, and he is threatened in this reign with a more eminent title.

May we not signify to certain people, of a serious profession, to say no more, that they are not obliged to make the world talk of their

* Cardinal Camus.

gaming, singing, and playing the buffoon like other men, and that to see them so jocular and communicative, one would not believe they were elsewhere so solemn and rigid? May we not presume to intimate, that thereby they offend against politeness, upon which they value themselves? Politeness modifies and conforms the outward demeanour to conditions, avoiding all contrast, and never showing the same man under such different shapes as make him a grotesque compound, a fantastical Zany.

We ought not to judge of men as of a picture or statue, at the first sight; there is an inside, a heart to be searched: the veil of modesty covers merit, and the mask of hypocrisy disguises malignity; few are there whose discernment authorises them to pass sentence; it is but gradually, and, perhaps, then compelled by time and circumstances, that complete virtue or absolute vice come at last to show themselves in all their colours.

“ * . . . He said that wit, in that beautiful
 “ lady, was a diamond set to the best advantage; (and continuing to speak of her), all
 “ who talk of her, added he, find something
 “ in her wit so rational and poignant, that
 “ they can hardly distinguish their admiration
 “ from love; with all the qualities adapted to
 “ a perfect friendship, she has wherewith to
 “ make other impressions: too blooming and
 “ beautiful not to please, but too modest to

* A fragment.

“ affect it, she esteems men only for their merit, and believes she has only friends: her vivacity and sentiments surprise and charm, and though she perfectly understands the delicacies and finesses of conversation, sometimes makes such happy sallies, as among other pleasures which they give, always dispense with a reply. She talks with you, like one who is unlearned, who seems to doubt, and wants to be informed, and hearkens to you like one who knows a great deal, sets a true value on what you say, and who will not let any thing of your conversation be lost. Far from affecting a show of wit by contradictions, or imitating Elvira, who had rather be thought smart than solid and discreet, she adopts your thoughts, and as her own enlarges on them, embellishes them, and makes you extremely pleased with yourself that you thought so well, and spoke so much better than you yourself believed you did. She despises ostentation, and in speaking or writing never substitutes ornament instead of reason, persuaded that the truest eloquence is simplicity: if it is to serve any one to engage your concurrence, leaving fine speeches and politeness to Elvira, who makes use of them in all cases, Artenice employs only sincerity, warmth, earnestness and persuasion. Her predominant pleasures are in reading, and conversing with persons of worth and reputation, and this not so much to be known to them, as to know

“ them: we may prophetically commend her
“ for the transcendent wisdom which will one
“ day certainly shine forth in her, and for all
“ the merit of her future days; since having,
“ with an unexceptionable conduct, better in-
“ tentions and sure principles, highly useful to
“ those who, like her, are exposed to complai-
“ sance and flattery; and being singular with-
“ out rudeness, and indeed a little inclined to
“ retirement, it is impossible she can want any
“ thing but opportunities, or, as some would
“ call it, a spacious theatre, for the display of
“ all her endowments in their full lustre.”

A handsome woman, the more natural she is, the more beautiful; she loses nothing by being careless; and without any other ornament than those of her beauty and youth, an innocent grace shines in her face, animates every little action so much, that there would be less danger to see her adorned with all the magnificence of dress and art of fashion. Thus an honest man is respected, independent of all that outward deportment by which he would endeavour to make his person more grave, and his virtue more specious: a demure look, a singularity in habit, a slow step, add nothing to probity, nor heighten merit; they rather adulterate its genuine openness, at least raise suspicions to its prejudice.

A starched gravity becomes farcical, two extremes thus joining, whose centre is dignity; this is not gravity, but acting the part of a grave man: he that studies to be so will never

obtain it. Either gravity is natural, or there is no such thing, and it is easier to descend from it than attain to it.

A man * of parts and reputation, if he is peevish and austere, does more harm than good, frightens youth into an ill opinion of virtue, as too rigid in its rules and too painful in its practice: if, on the contrary, he is free and cheerful, he gives them a profitable lesson, he teaches them that men may reconcile pleasure and business, virtue and hilarity, and thus becomes an example they willingly follow.

Physiognomy is not given us for a rule to judge men by; it may serve us to give a guess at them.

An ingenious air in men is the same with regular features among women; it is the kind of beauty at which the most vain can aspire.

A man of eminent merit and talents †, and who is confessedly such, is not ugly with the most irregular features; or if there is even a deformity, it makes no impression.

How much art is there required to keep to Nature? What time, what rules, attention, and exactness, to dance with the same freedom and grace as you walk, to sing as you speak, to speak

* M. Harlay.

† M. Pelisson, Historiographer to the King and Academy, of such an unhappy countenance, that the Marchioness of Sevigny said that he assumed too much of men's privilege of being ugly: he turned from the Protestant to the Roman church, though the reality of his religion is much questioned, but his strict integrity is confessed by all parties. His Works are few and excellent; he died in 1694. See *Lives of French Writers*.

and exprefs yourself as you think, to give that spirit and force, that paffion and energy, to an harangue delivered publicly, with which we sometimes naturally, and without meditation, animate our familiar scenes?

They who, without any previous knowledge of us, think amifs of us, do us no harm; they attack not us, but the phantom of their own imagination.

There are some little decorums, and points of good manners, due to places, times, and persons, which no wit would teach, but in which we imitate custom without any trouble: to judge of men by their omiffions or unpolitenefs in this kind, before they are acquainted with the ceremonial, is to pafs Judgment on them by their nails, or the curl of their hair; it is a Judgment of which we fhall soon find the error.

Whether it is lawful to judge of men by a fingle fault is with me a question? alfo, whether an extreme neceffity, a violent paffion, or a fudden impulf, can be drawn into confequence?

The contrary to the report, either of affairs or persons, is often the truth.

Without an exact attention to what we fpeak, we are liable to fay Yes or No to the fame thing, or on the fame person, in an hour's time; though this inconfiftency is no more than the effect of an eafy converfible humour, naturally leading us not to contradict this man, or that, though they talk of things quite oppofitely.

A partial man is exposed to frequent mortifications; how can it be otherwise? His favourites cannot be ever fortunate and wise, nor those whom he declares against be always in fault or unhappy. This must disconcert him, and put him out of countenance either at his friends' errors, or at the prosperity or conduct of those whom he is known to despise.

A man subject to be prepossessed, if he dares accept a place of authority, either ecclesiastical or civil, is a blind man who would be a painter, a dumb man who would be a preacher, or who would be a musician; these are but faint resemblances, imperfectly expressive of the misery of prepossession: it is, besides, a desperate malady, incurable and infectious to all who approach the patient; it makes us desert our equals, inferiors, relations, and friends, even our physician; it is past their skill to work any cure without bringing him to a sense of his distemper, and the propriety of their prescription, which are to hear, to doubt, to enquire, and to examine. Flatterers, cheats, and backbiters, they whose tongues move by interest or malice, are the quacks in which they confide, who make them swallow all they please; it is they that poison and destroy them.

Descartes's rule, never to decide on the least truth before it is clearly and distinctly known, is convenient and just, and ought, especially, to extend to our judgments on persons.

Nothing revenges us better of any disadvantageous sentence on our wit, conduct, morals,

or manners, than the base and poor characters of the favourites of our censures.

From the same turn of mind that you neglect a man of merit, you admire a blockhead.

A blockhead is one without wit enough to be a coxcomb.

The coxcomb is the blockhead's man of merit.

The impertinent is a forward coxcomb; the coxcomb wearies, tires, fatigues, and disgusts. The impertinent teazes, provokes, and offends; he begins where the other ends.

The coxcomb is between the impertinent and the blockhead, and is a medley of both.

Vices come from the depravation of the heart; faults from constitution; ridiculousness from want of sense.

The ridiculous man is one who, while he is so, has the appearance of a blockhead.

The blockhead is always ridiculous, it is his temper; a man of sense may sometimes be ridiculous, but will not be so long.

An error in conduct makes a wise man ridiculous.

Dulness is the criterion of the blockhead, futility of the coxcomb, levity of the impertinent. Ridiculousness seems to reside sometimes in those that are really ridiculous, and sometimes in the imagination of those who believe they see ridicule where it neither is nor can be.

Rudeness, clownishness, and brutality, may be the vices of a man of sense.

A stupid man is a silent blockhead, and, in that, more supportable than the talkative.

What is sometimes a jest from a man of sense, is a blunder from a blockhead.

If a coxcomb apprehended he could speak amiss, he would no longer be so.

One sign of a deficiency of sense is to be always telling stories.

The blockhead is uneasy to himself, the coxcomb is forward and confident, the impertinent has effrontery in his looks; merit throwds itself under modesty.

The pragmatcal man is made up of the direction of a few petty concerns, dignified with the name of Affairs, and of a very slender stock of sense.

A grain or two of sense, and an ounce of business, more than goes to the pragmatcal, make a busy body.

While you only laugh at the busybody he keeps to his name; but if he gives cause of complaint, he then commences assuming.

The character of the man of honour is between that of the knowing and the honest man, tho' in an unequal distance from its two extremities.

The distance from the man of honour to the knowing man daily diminishes, till it quickly disappears.

The knowing man is one who hides his passions, understands his interest, sacrifices many things to it, has either acquired wealth, or knows how to keep it.

The man of honour is one who does not go on the highway, commits no murders, in a

word, whose vices are not flagrant and scandalous.

We know very well that an honest man is a man of honour; but it is comical to think, that many a man of honour is quite another thing than an honest man.

The honest man is neither a saint nor a bigot; it has been his study only to be virtuous.

Genius, judgment, wit, and sense, are different, but not incompatible.

There is just the difference between good sense and good taste, as between the cause and the effect.

Genius is to wit, as the whole to its part.

Shall I call him a man of sense whose sphere is only in a single art, or even a science, in which I allow him to be perfect, but out of that he is void of judgment, invention, fancy, manners, or conduct? he does not understand me, he has no thought, and cannot speak a proper word. A musician, for instance, who, after he has enraptured me with his harmony, seems to be shut up with his lute, and when he is without his instrument, is like a machine out of order, where something is wanting, and which is of no further use or entertainment.

Again, what shall I say of a genius for play? who can define it to me? Is there no need of forecast, cunning, or skill, at ombre or chess? and if there is, how comes it that we see men of weak parts excel in these games, whilst many fine geniuses are so dull at them, that they are in the utmost confusion to move a man, or play a card, to the purpose.

There is something in the world, if possible, still more incomprehensible. View that person; what a dull, sottish and stupid figure *! he knows neither how to speak nor relate what he has seen; but if he puts pen to paper, how does he charm! no *Tales* like his; he makes animals, stones, trees, and every thing else, talk; his Works are all elegance, nature, and delicacy, and each in their perfection.

Another † is simple, bashful, and tiresome in conversation; he mistakes one word for another, and his judgment of any composition of his depends on the money it brings him in; he cannot rehearse it with any tolerable grace, nor so much as read his own writings: yet, at composing, he is not inferior to Augustus, Pompey, Nicomedes, and Heraclius: he is a king, a politician, a philosopher; he undertakes to make heroes speak and act; he describes the Romans, and they are greater, and more Romans in his verse, than in their own history.

Would you have another prodigy? Here is a man easy ‡, soft, complaisant, tractable; and then at a sudden start impetuous, choleric, and capricious: again you see him simple, ingenuous, credulous, and sportive, a gray-haired

* M. La Fontaine, an inimitable writer of *Tales* and *Fables*. See his very entertaining Life in those of the *French Writers*.

† P. Corneille, the dramatic Poet.

‡ Santeuil, a Religious, author of several very beautiful Latin pieces; his first years were very licentious, and his latter truly becoming his function. See *Lives of the French Writers*.

child; but permit him to recollect himself, or rather to give himself up to a certain genius that operates within him, perhaps independent of him, and without his knowledge; what rapture! what elevation! what imagery! what Latinism! You will ask me, do you speak of one and the same man? Yes, of the identical Theodas, and of him only. He cries out, labours with agitations, rolls on the ground, rises, thunders, and roars, and yet amidst the tempest emits a ravishing effulgence: but to lay aside figure, he talks like a fool, and thinks like a wise man; speaks truth ridiculously, and deliriously mutters the finest reason. I may say farther, he talks and acts beyond what he knows; he has in him, as it were, two souls who have no acquaintance, no connection or dependence on each other, but alternate influences and distinct functions. This picture would want another surprising touch, should I omit to tell you, that though so insatiably greedy of praise, that he could tear the critic's eyes out, he has at the same time the docility to suffer their censure. I begin to fancy myself, that I have been describing two different persons; and yet to make out a third in Theodas is not impossible; for he is an odd man, a comical man, and an excellent man.

Next to sound Judgment, diamonds and pearls are the rarest things to be met with.

Such a one is famed for his extraordinary endowments, and wherever he goes is received with honours, but he is slighted at home, and

cannot bring his own relations to esteem him. Another, on the contrary, is a prophet in his country, in high reputation amongst his servants, but it is confined within his own walls; he plumes himself with his merit, being the idol of the family: this character, when he visits, he leaves at home; his worth has never been observed in any other place.

The world * rise up against a man of a growing reputation, his friends can hardly digest his growing merit, or the first report that seems to lift him to that glory of which they had been long possessed; they hold out to the last, till the prince has declared himself by recompenses; then all crowd to congratulate him, and only from that day he takes place as a man of merit.

We often affect to praise some men immoderately who little enough deserve it; we extol them, and, were it in our power, would advance them above such as are eminently valuable; which proceeds either from our being weary of applauding always the same person, or because their glory, apparently lessened by being thus divided, becomes more supportable to our envy.

We see some sailing before the propitious gale of Favour with such rapidity that they lose sight of land, and continue their course with all their canvasses spread; they proceed in a series of successes; their schemes, their coun-

* The French Academy.

cils, and their actions, never fail of praise and rewards: when they appear abroad they are furrounded with compliments and homage. Like a lofty rock which mocks the tempestuous waves, all the blasts of power, riches, violence, flattery, authority, and favour, cannot shake them. The public is the rock on which at last they are dashed to pieces.

It is common, and, as it were, natural to judge of other's productions only by their affinity with our own. The poet, filled with sublime ideas, and heated with the glow of fancy, makes small account of the orator's discourse, which is often confined to simple facts; and the historian cannot comprehend how a rational man can employ his time in contriving fictions, or finding out a rhyme. Thus the divine, immersed in the study of fathers and councils, thinks all other learning and knowledge low and insignificant, whilst he, perhaps, is as much despised by the geometrician.

He who has a talent to excel in a particular thing, and reads lectures on it, may want sense enough to know that he ought to be silent on another subject of which he has but a slight knowledge; he confidently expatiates beyond the limits of his genius; but he loses himself, and the renowned Doctor talks like an ignoramus.

Herilus, whether he speaks, declaims, or writes, is continually citing; he brings in the prince of philosophers to tell you that wine will make you drunk; and the Roman orator,

that water qualifies it. When he discourses of morals, it is not he, but the divine Plato, that assures you virtue is amiable, and vice odious, or that one and the other will turn into habit. Things the most common and trivial, things which he himself is capable of thinking, he will owe to the Ancients, to the Latins and Greeks: it is not to give weight to what he says, nor to gain praise for what he knows; it is merely for the sake of citations.

To mention a piece of wit as your own is the readiest way to lose the credit of it; the men of wit, or those that think themselves so, receive it coldly, and bestow no comment upon it, because they ought to have said it, and did not; on the contrary, it would heighten it, if told only at second hand; then it is but a story, of which they might be ignorant without any derogation to their wit; it is more insinuating, and gives less jealousy; it offends no body: if it is diverting, it is laughed at; if excellent, it is admired.

It was said of Socrates, that he was delirious, and at best but a witty madman; but those Greeks who made so free with that sage may not unjustly pass for madmen themselves. What whimsical pictures, said they, does this dotard draw! what brain-sick representations! how could he form such visionary ideas? Such colours! such a pencil! chimeras all! I say. Mistaken judges! they were real monsters, they were common vices, but painted so much to the life, that the very sight of them terrified. So-

crates was far from a Cynic, he spared persons; but lashed the prevailing depravations.

A man who has raised himself by tricks is acquainted with a philosopher, knows his precepts, morals, and conduct; and, not imagining that mankind has any other end in their actions than what has all along employed his life, says in his heart, I pity him; it is over with this censor; he is in a wrong course; such steerage will never carry him to the delicious port of preferment: and, according to his own principles, he argues justly.

I pardon, says Antisthenes *, those whom I have praised in my Works, if they forget me; what have I done for them? they deserved praise. But I should not so easily pardon forgetfulness in those whose vices I have attacked without touching their persons, if they owed me the invaluable obligation of being amended; but this is a success which is never seen. It follows, that neither the one nor the other are obliged to make me any return.

They may, adds the philosopher, envy or deny my writings their due recompense; but to diminish my reputation is beyond all their devices, and, were it not, they cannot hinder me from being easy under their attacks.

It is a good thing to be a philosopher; but only to be accounted such is of little advantage: to give one the title of Philosopher is an affront, till the suffrages of men take a more

favourable turn, and restore to that august name its proper idea, and annex to it all the esteem which it deserves.

There is a philosophy which raises us above ambition and fortune; equals us to, do I say? places us above the rich, the great, and the powerful; which makes us condemn preferments, and those that procure them; which raises us above eager wishes and base practices; which saves us the fatigue of cringing, petitioning, and soliciting; and even restrains exultation and insolence, the usual concomitants of great promotions.

There is another philosophy which inclines and subjects us to all these things, but for the sake of our relations and friends; and this is the better of the two.

It will shorten and rid us of a thousand tedious discussions, to take it for granted that some persons are not capable of talking well; and to condemn all that they have said, do say, or will say.

We only approve of others as we imagine they resemble us; and to esteem any one seems no more than to think him our equal.

The same vices which are huge and insupportable in others we do not feel in ourselves; they seem to rest without weight in us as in their centre. Many, speaking of another, draw a hideous picture of him, not in the least imagining that at the same time they are painting themselves.

Nothing would make us correct our own

faults so readily as discerning and acknowledging them in others; it is at this just distance that, appearing what they really are, we should conceive a hatred of them equal to all their deformity.

A discreet behaviour turns upon two points, the past and the future: he that has a faithful memory and a keen foresight will never censure in others those faults he may have been guilty of himself, or condemn an action which, in a parallel case, and in like circumstances, he sees it will be impossible for him to avoid.

The soldier and the politician, like cunning gamesters, do not make chance, but they prepare it, forward it, and seem almost to determine it; they not only know what the fool and the coward are ignorant of, I mean to make use of chance when it happens, but by their measures and precaution they know how to improve this or that chance, or several of them together: if this point happens, they get by it; if that comes to pass, they also are gainers; and the same point they improve several different ways. These wise men may be commended both for their good fortune and prudent conduct, and in them chance ought to be recompensed as virtue.

I place no body above a great politician but he that despises to become such, and is more and more persuaded that the world does not deserve to take up his thoughts.

In the best of counsels there is something to displease us; they are not our own thoughts,

and therefore presumption and caprice furnish pretences enough immediately to reject them, and reflection and necessity only compel us to follow them.

What surprising success has accompanied that favourite * during the whole course of his life! was there ever such a tide of prosperity; no interruption, not the least disgrace! The first posts, the prince's ear, immense treasures, a perfect health, and an easy death; but what a huge account has he to give for a life spent in favour! for counsels given, for the neglect of others, for good omitted, and for evil committed, either by himself or his instruments; in a word, for all his prosperity?

We gain by death the praises of our survivors, frequently without any other merit than that of ceasing to be; the same eulogiums serve at present for Cato and Piso.

There is a report that Piso is dead; a great loss indeed! he was a good man, and deserved a longer life; he was a man of wit and courtesy, resolution and courage; he was generous and faithful; add, provided that he be really dead.

Calumny and invective against persons of distinguished probity, candour, and benevolence, is not so much their eulogium as a reproach on mankind.

Such a one relieves the necessitous, and neglects his own family, and leaves his son a beg-

* M. le Tellier.

gar: another builds a new house, though he has not paid for the lead of that which was finished ten years before: a third is liberal in presents and donations, and ruins his creditors: I would fain know whether pity, liberality, or magnificence, can be the virtues of an unjust man? or whether humour and vanity are not rather the causes of this injustice?

Dispatch is an essential circumstance of that justice we owe to others: to make them wait is injustice.

They do well, or do their duty, who with alacrity do what they ought. He does very ill who suffers the world to speak long of him in the future tense, and to say he will do well.

It is said of a great man, who has two set meals a-day, and spends his life betwixt eating and digestion, that he is starving, to express he is not rich, or that he is in ill circumstances; this is a figurative expression, which might more literally be applied to his creditors.

The honesty, discretion, and politeness of the age of both sexes, give me a good opinion of what we call former times.

It is a presumption in parents to expect every thing from the good education of their children; and a fatal error to expect nothing, and so neglect it.

Were it true what several affirm, that education does not change the soul and constitution, and that the alterations it produces are merely outward and superficial, yet would I be far from saying that it is unprofitable.

He that speaks little is sure of this advantage, it is presumed he has wit; and if in reality he is not deficient in it, then it is imagined to be of the best sort.

To attend only to ourselves and the present time is the source of error in politics.

The greatest misfortune, next to that of being convicted of a crime, is often that of being obliged to clear ourselves from the charge; though honourably acquitted in a court of justice, accusations stick with the people.

One man is a very exact observer of the practical rules of religion, yet he is neither commended nor censured: he is not so much as thought of; another, after ten years' utter neglect of all religious duties, takes up, and lives the same life as the former, he shall be admired and applauded; every man's Judgment is free; for my part, I blame his long omission of his duty, and think him happy in his reformation.

The flatterer is wanting in a good opinion both of himself or others.

Some are forgot in the distribution of favours, which puts us upon inquiry, Why were they forgot? And if they were preferred, then the question would be, Why were they remembered? Whence proceeds this contrariety? is it from the character of the persons, or the instability of our sentiments, or rather from both?

It is usual to debate in companies who shall be chancellor, archbishop, or pope, after the

removal of the present. We proceed further; every one makes the promotion according to his wishes or caprice, which is often of persons more aged and infirm than the present possessors of those places; and as dignity is so far from accelerating the death of him who is invested with it, that it revives all their youth, and gives the body and soul fresh vigour, so it is no unusual thing for a great man to bury his successors.

Disgrace extinguishes hatred and jealousy: he who is not great enough to raise our envy may behave completely. There is no virtue so sublime but we can pardon in him: it would not vex us if he proves a hero.

Nothing appears well in a man out of favour; virtue and merit are slighted, or misinterpreted into vice. Is his courage ardent, is he above any dread of fire or sword, or does he face the enemy with the gaiety of Bayard and Montrevil? he is rash, and hot-headed, and inconsiderate; there is nothing of the true hero in him.

I contradict myself, I own it, but blame mankind, whose Judgments I relate: I speak not of different men, but of the same * identical men so variable in their Judgments.

Less than twenty years brings about a general change of opinion, not only in abstruse things, but those that appeared most clear and

* Pope Innocent XI. whose sentiments after his exaltation were the very reverse of those for which he declared when only cardinal.

certain. I shall not attempt to maintain that fire in its own nature, and abstracted from our sensations, is void of heat, that is to say, nothing like what we feel in ourselves at approaching to it, lest some time or other it may become as hot as ever it was thought: nor shall I advance that one right line falling on another makes two right angles, or two equal to two right angles, lest something more or less being discovered, my proposition may be ridiculed; nor less cautious will I be to join with all France in saying that Vauban* is infallible; for how do I know but that, and in a short time, it may be intimated, that even in sieges, which are his peculiar and supreme excellency, he has committed no fewer blunders than Antiphrilus.

If you believe people exasperated against each other, over whom passion has the ascendancy, the learned man is a pedant, the magistrate a boor or mechanic, the partisan an oppressor, the gentleman an upstart; but it is strange that these scurrilous names, which Choler and Rancour have invented, should become so familiar to us, and that Contempt, cold and inactive as it is, should dare to use them.

You are in a ferment, you fly about, especially when the enemy begin to give way, and the victory is no longer in suspense, or before

* This happened to M. de Vauban after the retaking of Namur by the King of England in 1695, when he was censured for errors in the fortifications of that place; but he proved, that through an ill-timed parsimony his plan had not been executed, particularly in the omission of a cavalier towards the river, on which side the city was taken.

a town that has capitulated : you mightily affect in a fight, or during a siege, to be seen every where, with a view of being seen no where ; to prevent the orders of the general, for fear of obeying them, and to seek occasions, rather than to wait for them, or receive them : whisper me, is there any real bravery in all these motions ?

Place men to maintain a doubtful post where they may, and where they may not be killed ; they love both honour and life.

From men's fondness for life, could it be imagined that they love any thing beyond it ? and that glory which they prefer to their dear life is often no more than an opinion of them admitted without reflection in the minds of a thousand people, whom either they do not know, or do not esteem.

Some * who, neither soldiers nor courtiers, make campaigns, and follow the Court ; who are not actors, but only spectators, of a siege, are soon cured of their curiosity about a fortified town, with all its surprising varieties about trenches, the effects of bombs, cannons, and carcasses, the order of an attack or retreat, which they view at a distance ; the resistance continues, bad weather comes on, the fatigues increase, every place is full of dirt or water, and both the seasons and the enemy are at once to be encountered, perhaps after all the

* Alluding to several private persons who went to see the siege of Namur in 1693, during which there was a continual series of such foul weather, that these curious gentlemen soon grew out of conceit with making campaigns.

lines are forced, and they are inclosed between a town and an army : dismal extremities ! their courage fails, they begin to mutter. Will the raising this siege be of such fatal consequence ? does the safety of the state depend upon one citadel ? The heavens themselves declare against us, it is best to submit to them, and defer the enterprize till another season. They shake their heads at the resolution, and if they durst to say so, the obstinacy of the General, grappling with obstacles, and animated even by difficulties, who exposes and fatigues himself night and day to accomplish his design. But at sight of a white flag from the enemy, these dispirited wretches are the first to cry up the importance of the conquest, to foretel the consequences, and exaggerate the necessity of persevering in the attempt, and the danger and shame of raising of a siege, and to prove that the army that covered us from the enemy was invincible ; they return with the Court, and, as they pass through towns and villages, are proud to be gazed at by the inhabitants ; they glory on the road as if they were the men that took the place, and at their return they deafen you with flanks, curtains, ravelins, bastions, half-moons, and covered ways ; are very particular on those places where curiosity led them, and the terrible hardships they went through, and the frequent danger they ran of being killed, or taken ; as to their fears, not a word is said of them.

What real prejudice results to the orator in being out in a sermon or an oration ? it leaves

him all his wit, good sense, fancy, morality, and learning, it deprives him of nothing; yet it is very surprising that, a sort of shame and ridicule being affixed to it, men will expose themselves to such lapses by tedious and often unprofitable discourses.

Those that make the worst use of their time most complain of its shortness; such as waste it in dressing, eating, sleeping, tattling, in contriving what to do, and generally in doing nothing at all, want it for their business or diversions; on the contrary, they who make the best use of it have some to spare.

There is no statesman so taken up with business, but trifles away two hours every day, which, in a long life, runs high; and if this abuse is much greater in other stations, what an infinite waste is there of that precious thing, of which the generality complain they have not enough.

There are a species of God's creatures called Men, who have a soul, which is a spirit, whose whole life is employed, and whose attention is taken up, in sawing of marble; that is mean, that is a poor waste of life: but hold, you who sneer at it; in what are you so useful? you spend your days in doing nothing serious; this is yet meaner than sawing marble.

The major part of mankind so far forget that they have a soul, that they bestow their attention upon, and take delight in, things quite derogatory to it, where it seems to be of no use, that it is thought no small commenda-

tion of any man to say he thinks; this is become a common eulogium, and yet it sets a man only a degree above a dog or a horse.

How do you divert yourself? how do you pass your time? is the question both among fools and men of sense. If I answer, in opening my eyes, and seeing, in hearing and understanding, in enjoying health, ease, and liberty, that is saying nothing; the solid, the great, and the only advantages of life are of no account, make no impression: I game, I hunt, I dance, I intrigue, are the usual and expected answers.

Is it good for a man to have a liberty (if it were possible) so large and extensive, that it would only prompt him to desire one thing, that is, to have less liberty?

Liberty is not idleness; it is free use of time, it is to chuse our labour and our relaxation: in one word, to be free is not to do nothing, but to be the sole arbiter of what we do, and what we leave undone: in this sense, how great a good is liberty!

Cesar was not too old to think of the conquest of the universe*; a splendid course of life, and a great name after death, was the only happiness adapted to his endeavours; being born brave and ambitious, and of an athletic constitution, he could not better employ his time than in the conquest of the world. Alex-

* Vide Pascal's *Thoughts*, chap. 3. where he says the contrary.

ander was very young for so serious a design; it is surprising that in his juvenile years women and wine did not sooner defeat his enterprise.

A young prince of an august race *, the love and hope of his people, given by Heaven to prolong the felicity of the earth, greater than his progenitors, the son of a hero, who is his pattern, has already convinced the universe, by his divine qualities and premature virtues, that the sons of heroes are nearer being so than other men †.

If the world is to last only an hundred millions of years, it is now, I may say, in its blooming childhood; we ourselves are so near the first men and the patriarchs, that remote ages will not fail to reckon us among them: but if we may judge of futurity by what is past, what things remain still unknown to us in the arts and sciences, in Nature, nay, I durst say, in history too! what discoveries will be made! what revolutions will happen in states and empires! what ignorance must our's be, and how slender is that experience which is not above six or seven thousand years standing?

There is no way too tedious for him that travels early and without hurry; and to the patient man there are no advantages too distant.

To solicit no body, and not to expect solicitations from any other, delicious situation!

* The Dauphin, a virtuous and learned prince.

† Contrary to the trivial Greek proverb.

a golden age, and, of man, the most natural state !

The world is for those that follow courts, or dwell in cities ; but Nature is for them who inhabit the country ; they only live, or, at least, only know that they live.

Why this coldness ? and why these bitter complaints against me for some poignant expressions of mine in relation to some of our young courtiers ? You are not vicious, Thrasilius, are you ? for my part, I know it not, but now you inform me so yourself ; that which I know is, that you are not young.

And you again who are pleased to take pet at what I said of some great people, may not you be said to cry at another's hurt ? Are you haughty, malicious, a buffoon, a flatterer, a hypocrite ? that is more than I knew, or indeed thought of you ; I was speaking of great men.

Moderation and prudence, abstractedly, keep men obscure ; to be known and admired, it is necessary to have great virtues, or, perhaps, great vices will equally serve the turn.

Men are prepossessed, and seduced by success relatively to the conduct of both great and mean persons ; a fortunate crime passes with the commendations of a real virtue, and success supplies the place of probity : it is an atrocious action, a foul nefarious attempt indeed, which success cannot palliate.

Men, seduced by fair appearances and specious pretences, are easily induced to like and approve the ambitious scheme of some great

man; they speak feelingly of it; the boldness or the novelty of it pleases them, and they make themselves sure of the success: but if its fate be to miscarry, then, without any regard to their former judgment, the design was rash, impracticable, and not altogether justifiable.

There are some designs which are of that vast consequence, make so universal a noise, and incite such fluctuations of hope and fear in whole nations *, according to their different interests, that all the honour and fortunes of a man are embarked in them; after appearing on the stage with such menacing pomp, he cannot sneak off in silence, how dreadful soever the danger may be which he foresees will attend the prosecution of his undertaking: he must on, though it overwhelms him; his honour will not permit a prudential forbearance.

In an ill man there is not wherewithal to make a great man: you may commend his foresight and contrivance, admire his conduct, extol his address in taking the shortest and surest cut to his ends; if his ends are bad, prudence has no share in them; and where prudence is wanting, find greatness if you can.

OF THE FASHION.

A VERY foolish thing, and which betrays an extreme weakness, is a compliance with

* The hazardous expedition of William Prince of Orange into England, from whence he drove King James II. who had incensed the nation, by violating their civil and religious liberties.

Fashion, when extended to diet, way of living, health, and conscience. Brown meat is out of Fashion, and therefore insipid: Fashion forbids curing a fever by bleeding. Who worth naming has, this great while, departed by the hands of Theotymus*? none now but the populace are saved by this pious exhortation; he may be said to have outlived himself.

Curiosity is not a taste for what is good and beautiful, but for what is rare and singular; for those things which another cannot match. It is not a liking to those things which are really best, but to those which are most in the Fashion. It is not an amusement, but a passion, and often so violent, that it yields to love and ambition only in the meanness of its object. Neither is it a passion for every thing that is scarce and in vogue, but only for some particular that is rare, and yet in Fashion.

The florist has a garden without the town, where he spends his time from sun-rise to evening; you would think him planted there, that he had taken root in the midst of his tulips: he begins with his Pilgrim; he rubs his hands, stares, stoops down, and looks nearer at it, he never saw it look so fine before; he is in an ecstasy of joy; he leaves that for Orient †,

* M. Sachot, Curate of St Germain's, famous for attending the quality in their last hours; in which he lived to see himself succeeded by Father Bourdaloue.

† Several French names for different sorts of tulips.

thence to the Widow, leaves her for the Cloth of Gold, then on to the Agatha, and at last returns to the Pilgrim, where, tired with his perambulation, he sits down, and forgets his dinner in surveying all its particular beauties, its expanse, its lights and shades, but God and Nature are not in his thoughts; he goes no farther than the root of his tulip, which he would not part with for a thousand crowns, tho' he would give it you for nothing, if tulips should lose their vogue, and carnations be the fashionable flower. This reasonable creature, who has a soul, who professes a religion, returns tired and famished, but infinitely pleased with his day's labour; he has seen some tulips which none of his neighbours can match.

Talk to another of the farmer's wealth, of a plentiful harvest, or a good vintage, he is only nice in fruit, he understands not a word you say; then turn to figs or melons, tell him that the pear-trees break with their weight of fruit this year, that there are abundance of peaches, this is all out of his way; the plum is his favourite. Well, let them be your topic, yet no answer; he is only fond of a certain species of them, he sneers at the mention of any others; he leads you to the tree, and cautiously gathers this exquisite plum, divides it, gives you one half, and keeps the other himself; there is pulp! says he, what do you say to that? is it not Nectar and Ambrosia? let the whole world produce its equal: at this his nose swells, his eyes sparkle, and it is with a great deal of pains

that he checks his joy and vanity under an appearance of modesty. O! the respectable personage! never enough to be praised and admired! O Man, to be celebrated in all ages! let me take a view of his mien and shape while he is living, that I may have an idea of this eminent cultivator, who alone amongst mortals was the happy possessor of such a plum.

Visit the third *, and he talks of the virtuosos of his acquaintance, but especially of Diognetes. I admire him, says he, and understand him less than ever. You imagine that he endeavours to instruct himself by medals, that he esteems them the speaking evidences of past transactions, and unquestionable monuments of ancient history, nothing less; perhaps you guess that all the pains he takes to recover a head proceeds from the pleasure he enjoys in seeing an uninterrupted series of emperors; it is yet less: Diognetes knows nicely all the parts of a medal: he has a case full of medals, except one place, and this vacuity is such a mortifying sight to him, that he will fill it, if it cost him life and fortune.

Will you see my prints, adds Democedes? and presently he draws them out, and displays them: there you find one that is neither finely printed, neatly graved, nor well designed, and therefore more fit to be stuck up in some paltry street on holydays than to be preserved in a closet. He allows it to be ill graved and

* Father Menetrier a Jesuit,

worse designed ; but he assures you it is done by an Italian, of whom there is little extant ; that it is the only one in France of his hand ; that it came dear, and that he would not part with it for a much better of another hand : but I labour under a very sensible affliction, continues he, which will oblige me to have done with prints ; I have all Calot except one print ; indeed it is so far from being the best, that it is the worst that ever he did, but, without it, what signifies all my other Calots ? This print have I hunted after these twenty years ; but now I give it up : this is very trying !

Another satirizes those who make long voyages, either to divert uneasiness, or gratify curiosity ; yet keep no journal, or furnish us with no relations or memoirs ; who go to see, and see nothing, or at best forget what they have seen ; who desire only to remember new towers, drink foreign wine, and pass rivers whose names are unknown among us ; who go out of their own country to return again ; who love to be absent, that they may one day come from a distant country : so far this satyrist talks well, and engages our attention.

But when he adds that books are more instructive than travelling, and gives me to understand that he has a library, I desire to see it. I visit this gentleman, when at the very foot of the stairs I am ready to faint with the scent of Russia leather laid over his books. To encourage me, he tells me they are all gilt on the back and leaves, of correct editions, names

some of the best of them ; assures me his gallery is full of choice books, except one place, which is painted so delicately, that every body takes it for shelves of folios. He adds, that he never reads, nor sets foot in this gallery, and that he offers it now purely to oblige me. Great is his complaisance, and I thank him for it, but would as soon spend an hour in a tan-pit as in his library.

Some, by intemperate desire of knowledge, and an unwillingness to be ignorant of any thing, taste of all sorts of learning, and drink deeply of none ; they are more fond of knowing much than knowing thoroughly, and had rather be superficial smatterers in several sciences, than complete masters of any single one ; they every where meet with their match ; they are bubbles to their own vain curiosity, and the most they can compass by very painful efforts is to emerge a little beyond gross ignorance.

Others have the key of the sciences, but never enter themselves ; they spend their lives in diving into the Eastern and Northern languages, those of both Indies, those of both poles, nay, that of the world in the moon itself ; the most useless idioms, the most ridiculous and magical characters, employ the stretch of their minds, as a curious and valuable knowledge ; they cannot bear those who content themselves with their own language, or, at most, with Greek and Latin. These men read all the historians, and know nothing of history ; run through all books, without any improve-

ment; barren in facts and principles, their best collection, their greatest riches, consist in a multitude of exotic words and phrases, which are a useless load to their memory, whilst their understandings are empty and uncultivated.

A citizen, in a fit of building, builds himself a house, so fine, so stately, so decorated, that he is ashamed to live in it, and yet is unwilling to let it to a nobleman or statesman; he retires into the garret, where he spends his life, whilst the curious apartments are left to the English and Germans, who flock thither from their inns; there is a continual knocking at the fine gate to see the house, but no body enquires after the master.

I could point out others who see their daughters without decent food and apparel, every conveniency, and almost every necessary, is wanting to them; poor creatures! not so; a resource is in their own hands; it is a dusty repository of antiques, which would sell at a great rate; but truly they cannot prevail upon their taste to part with them.

Dyphilus * is a lover of birds; he began with one, and ends with a thousand: his house is so far from being the more pleasant, that it is pestered with them; the hall, the parlour, the staircase, the porch, the chamber, and closets, are so many aviaries; nothing is heard but wild notes; the blasts of the equinoctial

* The whimsical Santeuil, whose apartment was full of Canary birds.

winds are not so shrill and piercing ; there is no hearing one another speak but in those chambers that are set apart for receiving visits, and there you are plagued with his yelping curs : it is no longer an agreeable amusement to Dyphilus, but a toilsome fatigue, which his body can hardly undergo : he spends his days, those days that pass irretrievably, and for which he is accountable, in scattering seeds and removing filth : he gives a man a salary for no other service than to attend his Canary birds, and to teach them with a flagelet. It is true, what he spends with one hand he spares on the other ; for his children have neither tutors nor education. In the evening, tired with his darling pleasure, he shuts himself up without being able to take the least repose till his birds are at roost, and these little creatures, on whom he dotes only for their song, give over singing ; he not only dreams of them, but is himself metamorphosed into a bird, and all the night chirps and perches, he molts and broods.

Who can describe all the different kinds of trivial curiosity ? Could you imagine, when you hear such-a-one talk of his Leopard *, of his Plume *, of his Music *, and brag that the world does not afford the like ; could you imagine that he intends to sell his shells ? why not ? it is high time, if he bought them by their weight in gold.

There is another an admirer of insects ; he augments his collection every day ; he is the

* Names of shells.

greatest critic in Europe at a butterfly ; he has them of all sizes and colours. What an unlucky time do you take to pay him a visit ? He is overwhelmed with sorrow ; he is quite out of temper, to the plague of his whole family : indeed he has had an irreparable loss ; go up to him, observe what he shows you on his finger ; it is dead, just expired ; it is a caterpillar, and such a caterpillar !

Duelling is the triumph of Fashion, and wherein its tyranny is most conspicuous and amazing. This custom does not allow the coward liberty to live, it compels him to go to be killed by a man of more bravery than himself, and so makes him fall undistinguished from a man of courage ; it has annexed honour and renown to an action of the most monstrous frenzy ; it has been dignified by the presence of kings, and has even been made, in some cases, a point of religion ; it decided the innocence of men, and the truth or falsity of capital accusations ; it was so deeply rooted in the opinion of the world, it had got such an entire possession in the minds of men, that to eradicate it has been one of the most glorious actions of the greatest of monarchs.

Some who were formerly in high repute for commanding armies, or for negotiations ; for the eloquence of the pulpit, or for poetry, are now disregarded as obsolete. How do men degenerate from what they were formerly ! is it their merit that is extinguished, or the taste of the world ?

A man of mode is not long so, Fashions being very transitory; if he happens to be a man of merit, he is not totally eclipsed, but still retains some radiancy; equally worthy of esteem, though less esteemed.

Virtue has that happiness in it, to be its own reward and support, to flourish without admirers and patrons; the want of assistance and applause, so far from injuring it, strengthens, purifies, and renders it more perfect; whether in or out of Fashion it is still virtue.

If you tell men, and especially the great, that such a man has virtue, they will tell you much good may do him; if he has a fine genius, well cultivated with science, they will answer you, What's o'clock? or, what weather is it? but if you inform them there is a fiddler who, besides several odd performances on his instruments, gulps down repeated bumpers of brandy, then they cry out, A rare fellow! where is he? bring him to me to-morrow, or this very evening, if you can possibly find him. He is brought, and this scoundrel, who is only fit to mount a stool in fairs, is presently admitted into their familiarity, is the spirit of their entertainments.

There is nothing brings a man sooner into repute than playing high; it is equal to hard drinking. Where is the polite, gallant, and witty man, were he a Catullus, or one of his disciples, who dares compare himself with him that loses eight hundred pistoles at a sitting?

A man of Fashion is like a certain blue

VOL. II.

E

flower *, growing spontaneously in ploughed grounds, which chokes the corn, spoils the crop, and takes up the room of something better ; it has no beauty nor value but what momentary caprice is pleased to give it : to-day it is in vogue and admired by the ladies, to-morrow quite otherwise, and the vulgar despise it.

A man of merit, on the contrary, is a flower which we do not describe by its colour, but call by its name, which we cultivate for its fragrancy or beauty ; one of the graces of Nature, one of the embellishments of the creation, admired by all men in all ages, and by us in imitation of them ; nor can the disgust and antipathy of any particular persons injure its reputation, a lily, a rose.

See, there, Eustrates in his gilded pinnace, sailing with a fair wind, a serene sky, and, in all appearance, settled weather ; but of a sudden it changes, the heavens are clouded, the tempest blusters, a wave oversets the lightly boat, it sinks : Eustrates rises to the surface of the waters, endeavours to swim, and we hope that he will reach the shore ; but another wave sinks him, and we give him over for lost : he appears above water a second time, manfully struggling, and our hopes revive, when a mountainous billow drives him to the bottom, from whence he never rises : he is drowned.

Voiture and Sarazin were born for the age they lived in, and appeared in a time which

* This flower was one summer the favourite ingredient in the ladies' nosegay.

seemed to expect them ; if they had not made such haste they had come too late, and I question whether, at this time, they would have been what they were then. Light conversation, gallant and familiar letters, delicate jocularities, and select parties, where wit was the only qualification, are now no more : to say that they would have revived them is too much ; all I can venture to advance in favour of their geniuses is, that, perhaps, they might have excelled in another way. But the ladies of this age are either devotees, coquettes, gamesters, or ambitious, and some of them all these together ; court-favour, gaming, gallants, and directors, have possessed themselves of the fort, and keep out the men of wit.

The fops and coxcombs are singular in their dress ; their hats are broader, their sleeves larger, and their coats of quite a different cut from those of other men ; they frequent all public places that they may be taken notice of ; whilst the man of sense leaves the Fashion of his clothes to his tailor ; to run counter to the Fashion shows a turn of mind perhaps equally wrong with the most fashionable affectation.

We blame a Fashion that divides the stature of a man into two equal parts, of which one reaches to the waist, and the other includes the rest of the body ; we condemn those dresses which make the ladies' heads a basis of an edifice of several stories, the order and structure of which alter with their fancies, which separates the hair from the face for which Nature

designed it, and ties it upon their heads, making Bacchanals of them, and frightfully altering the mild and modest air of the sex into looks of pride, fierceness, and effrontery. Many Fashions are exclaimed against which, ridiculous as they may be, are ornamental whilst they last, and from which we reap all the advantages we could expect, which is to please; methinks there is more room for surprise at the levity and inconstancy of men, who successively call agreeable and ornamental things directly opposite to each other; who use those habits in comedies and masquerades which lately were accounted the most denotative of gravity; and that so small a time should make such a difference.

N . . . is rich; she eats and sleeps well; but head-dresses alter; and, when she thinks least on it, and supinely believes herself happy, she is quite out of the Fashion.

Iphis, at church, sees a new-fashioned shoe, looks upon his own with a blush, and cannot think himself dressed: he came to prayers only to show himself; but now he skulks, and, when got home, keeps his chamber all the rest of the day. He has a soft hand, with which he gives you a gentle squeeze: he is sure to laugh often to show his white teeth, and sets his face to a perpetual smile: he surveys his legs, views himself in the glass, and no body can have so good an opinion of another as he has of himself: he has acquired a delicate and clear voice, and is happy in a volubility of tongue: he has

a motion of his head, and a sort of sweetness in his eyes, which he uses to the best advantage: his gate is indolent, and his attitudes accurately studied: he sometimes makes use of a little red, but not so often as many other pretty fellows: he also wears breeches and a hat, and is never seen with ear-rings nor necklace, therefore I have not put him in the Chapter of Women.

Those Fashions in which men are so very nice as to their persons, they will not endure in their portraitures, as if they foresaw the indecency and ridiculousness of them upon the decay of the graces of novelty; they rather take up with the ornaments and drapery of the painter's fancy, often as little suitable to the face as to the character; and they affect haughty or indecent postures, a rough, lascivious, and passionate, or, at least, an incongruous design, which makes a captain of a young abbot, an harlequin of a counsellor, a Diana of a city dame, an Amazon or a Pallas of a silly timorous girl, a Lais of a woman of honour, a Scythian an Attila of a just and magnanimous prince.

One Fashion has hardly destroyed another, but it is justled out by a fresh novelty, which must itself make way for a successor, and that will not be the last, such is our giddiness; during these revolutions an age is spun out, which has turned all these several ornaments amongst things past which never return; the finest and most graceful mode is the most ancient, charming no less in our pictures than the

Roman Sagum * on the theatre; or the Mantle, the Veil, or the Turban†, in our tapestries and paintings.

Our fathers, with the knowledge of their persons, have transmitted to us that of their habits, their weapons ‡, and favourite ornaments; a benefit for which we can make no other return than by doing our posterity the same service.

Formerly the courtier wore his own hair, doublets, and large breeches, with bunches of ribbons, and was a libertine; that is no longer becoming: now he has a full wig, a close suit, plain stockings, and is devout. All this is Fashion, and no more.

He who during a considerable residence at Court was devout, and, as such, contrary to all reason, was the butt of ridicule, could he have ever flattered himself that he should come to be in the Fashion?

What will not a courtier || do for the sake of his fortune, if, rather than it should miscarry, he will turn devout?

The colours are all prepared, and the canvases stretched and primed; but how shall I fix this Proteus, who changes himself into a thousand dissimilar figures? He is devout, I see; I have hit him: ah! already he has deceived

* A Roman warlike habit. † Ornamental habits.

‡ Offensive and defensive.

|| The Duke of Beauvilliers, Governor of the Royal Children, son to the Duke de St Aignan, of whose estate he has taken possession, without paying any of his debts, who has put on the modish devotion,

me, and is a professed libertine ! Well, let him but continue even in this posture, and I shall not fail of drawing his irregularity of heart and mind so that he will be known ; but the Fashion comes on, and he is devout again in a trice.

He who has studied the Court knows what is virtue and what is devotion* ; there is no imposing upon him.

To neglect going to vespers, as obsolete and unfashionable, to know all the parts of the chapel, the places where to be seen, and where unobserved ; to be intent at church on God and business, to receive visits there, to give out orders and commissions, or wait for answers ; to chuse a director, and rely on him more than the Gospel ; to derive all sanctity and comfort from the reputation of a director ; to despise all whose director is of an inferior character, and scarce allow them to be in a state of salvation ; to like the Word of God only from the mouth of that director, to prefer mass and sacraments from him before all others ; to feed themselves with mystical books, as if there were neither Gospels, Epistles of the Apostles, or morals of the fathers ; to read and talk a jargon unknown to the first ages ; to be very circumstantial in amplifying the sins of others, and palliating their own ; to enlarge on their own sufferings and patience ; to lament their small progress in heroism as a sin ; to be in a secret alliance with some persons against others ;

• False devotion.

to have no value for any but those of their own party and cabal, and to suspect even virtue itself; greedily to relish prosperity and favour; to wish no body well but themselves; never to assist merit; to make piety subservient to ambition; to go to heaven through affluence and dignity; these are hitherto the greatest efforts of the fashionable devotion of this age.

A devoto is one that, under an atheistical king, would be an Atheist.

The devotos esteem nothing a crime but incontinence, or, to speak more exactly, the scandal and appearance of incontinence. If Pherecides passes for one that is cured of his fondness for women, and Pherenece for a chaste wife, it is enough for them: let them play at the ruinous games, drain their creditors, rejoice at the misfortunes of another, and turn them to their advantage, idolize the great, and condemn their inferiors; let them be bloated with conceit, rankled with envy; let them lie, calumniate, cabal, injure, it is their temper; would you have them assume that of good men, who avoid pride and injustice no less than the more latent vices?

When a courtier* shall be humble, divested of pride and ambition; when he shall cease to raise his fortune on the ruin of credulous gentlemen; when he shall be just, indulgent to his vassals, and pay his creditors; when he shall be neither knave nor calumniator; when he

* The Duke of Beauvilliers, President of the King's Council.

shall leave off luxurious feasting, unlawful amours; when he shall pray further than with his lips, and out of his prince's presence; when he shall cease to be morose and unapproachable; when his countenance shall clear up from its savage rusticity; when he shall not be remiss and obscure; when, by a conscientious application he shall reconcile multiplicity of employments; when he shall bend his attention to those arduous posts which concern the good of the state and people; when his character shall make me afraid to mention him in this place, and his modesty shall hinder him from knowing himself if I should not name him; then I shall say of him he is devout, or rather, that he is a man given to this age for a model of real virtue, and for the detection of hypocrites.

Onuphrius* has on his bed a brown serge coverlet, but he lyes upon callico and down; he is plainly but decently dressed, I mean he wears a light stuff in the summer, and a very good cloth in the winter; all his linen is extraordinary fine, but he takes a great deal of care

* M. de Mauray, Chaplain of the Invalids. He had been a musketeer, and for his enormities clapped up in a religious house; which seemed to have had such a good effect on him by a virtuous life of several years, that he was thought a proper person for the above chaplainship: but getting into the world again, he relapsed; and was so infatuated with one of his ladies, that, to maintain her suitably to her dignity, he mortgaged some appurtenances of the hospital: but this intrigue taking air, he was condemned to perpetual confinement in a religious house, where he died in a seeming repentance for his irregularities.

to hide it: he does not brag of his hair-shirt and scourge; no, then he would be thought what he is, an hypocrite; whereas he intends to pass for what he is not in the least, a devout man: it is true, without downright telling, he can raise a belief that he wears a hair shirt, and that he disciplines himself severely: he has several books lying about his chamber: this is the Spiritual Combat, that the Inward Christian, the other the Holy Year; his other books are under lock and key; if he is going along the streets, and observes one to whom it is necessary he should seem devout, down-cast eyes, a demure air, and a slow step, he has at command: upon coming into church, he observes whose eyes are upon him, and accordingly he falls upon his knees and goes to prayers, or else never thinks of kneeling and praying: if he sees a good man, or a man of authority approaching him, he not only prays, he meditates, and falls to sobbing and sighing; but this good man is hardly gone, when all these emotions are over. Another time, if he goes to an oratory, he rushes through the crowd, and chuses a place for his devotion where all the world may see how he humbles himself; if he perceives any courtiers who laugh and talk in the chapel louder than in the antichamber, he makes a greater noise than they, on purpose to silence them, and returns to his meditation, which is always a disdainful comparison between those babblers and himself. Of all things he avoids an empty church, where he may hear two mas-

ses successively, a sermon and vespers only between God and himself, without any other witness: he is as sure to frequent the churches of the greatest concourse; for there he does not lose his labour; there the eyes of a large congregation are upon him: he chuses two or three days in the year to fast without any occasion; towards the end of the winter he has a cough, his stomach is out of order, he has vapours and a fever, that he may be intreated, and, in some measure, compelled, to break Lent as soon as it is begun; with which, at length, he has the goodness to comply. If Onuphrius is named arbitrator amongst relations, or, in a family cause, he is for the strongest, I mean, the richest side; for he or she who has a plentiful estate ever to be wrong would be a paradox indeed. If he finds a rich man whom he can impose upon, and make his advantage of, he is his parasite; he never cajoles his wife, nor makes the least advances that way, but rather shuns her, and will leave her a part of his garment to be gone, unless he is as sure of her as of himself: he never attempts to seduce or debauch her by a devout jargon; that language he never speaks, as it is not habitual to him, but out of design, when it suits the matter in hand; no body is further from it when unseasonable. He knows where to find ladies more sociable and easy than his friend's wife, from whom he very seldom absents himself, unless it be to give occasion to the public to report that he is in a religious retirement;

and how, indeed, should they doubt it, when they see him appear again quite emaciated, like one who never spares himself? The women who improve and thrive in the shade of devotion agree excellently well with him, with this little difference only, that he slightes those who are upon the decline, and addresses himself only to the young, and amongst them it is only the most sprightly and blooming who share his company: they go, and he goes; they return, and he returns; they stay, and he stays; he has the happiness to see them in all places, and at all hours: what raptures! what edification must there be! when both parties are professedly devout: he is sure to make the best use he can of his friend's stupid prepossession in his favour; sometimes he borrows money of him, at other times artfully winds him into a voluntary loan of any sum, that he takes it unkind he does not make use of his purse when he has occasion. Sometimes his conscience will not allow him to take a single louis without giving a note, though his conscience never reminds him to take it up. At another time he says, with a free air, that he wants nothing, that is, when he wants an inconsiderable sum; at another time he publicly extols the generosity of his friend, on purpose to wheedle him out of something more considerable: he does not expect to succeed to all his real, nor to get a deed of gift of all his personal, estate, especially if a right and lawful heir must be set aside. A devout man is neither

tenacious nor violent, unjust nor selfish; Onuphrius is not a devout man, but he would pass for such, and, by a thorough, though a false, imitation of piety, he tacitly forwards his drifts; he never aims at the direct line of a family, nor insinuates himself where there is a daughter to portion, and a son to settle; he knows their right is too strong and inviolable to be shaken without a great deal of noise, which may, perhaps, reach the ears of his prince, to whom he professes himself careless and easy, to guard against suspicion which might beget a discovery; he chuses the collateral line, which he can attack with greater safety; he is the terror of first and second cousins, the flatterer and professed friend of all rich uncles; he gives himself out to be the legitimate heir of every rich old man that dies without issue, who must disinherit him, if he will have his relations succeed to his estate. If Onuphrius cannot quite throw them out, he will be sure to come in for some share; an artful calumny, an insidious advice, is sufficient for that, and, indeed, this talent is his masterpiece; nay, sometimes he represents it as a duty; for (to him) there are men whom, in conscience, he is obliged to decry; such are those for whom he has no love, and whom he desires to injure: he compasses his ends, sometimes without so much as opening his mouth. You talk to him of Eudoxus, he smiles or sighs; ask him why he does so, ask him again and again, he makes no answer; and he is in the right, he has said enough of him.

Laugh, Zelia *, be gay and wanton, as you used to be. How ! what is become of all your mirth ? I am rich, say you ; do not you see I am my own mistress, and now begin to have room to breathe in. Laugh, laugh louder, Zelia ; what is a good estate good for, if it brings thoughtfulness and melancholy along with it ? imitate the great, who are born in the bosom of riches ; they laugh sometimes, they give their inclinations full swing, and why should not you do the like ? Let it not be said of you that a new place, or some thousands a-year, more or less, should make you pass from one extremity to the other. I hold all upon courtesy, say you ? I was afraid so, Zelia ; but, believe me, do not leave off laughing, and give me a smile when I pass by you as formerly : fear nothing, I shall not have a less opinion of you and your post, I shall as firmly believe that you are rich and in favour. I am in devotion, you add : it is enough, Zelia, and I must remember that the sense of a good conscience, which gladdens the heart, and clears the aspect, is over with you ; and that the gloomy and austere passions have got the ascendant, and spread their wretched influence over all your exterior ; but you are not the only instance to prove that this fashionable devotion sooner makes a woman proud and disdainful than youth and beauty.

Arts and sciences have been vastly improved

* Madame Pontchartrain.

in this age, and are now refined to the highest degree; even that of salvation is reduced to rule and method, and augmented with the most delicate and sublime inventions of human understanding. Devotion * and geometry have their manners of speaking, or, what they call terms of art; and he that is ignorant of them is neither devout nor a geometrician. The first devout men, even those who were directed by the Apostles, were ignorant of them; they, poor folks, had only faith and good works, and thought of nothing but of believing and living well.

It is a very nice thing for a religious prince to reform his Court, and introduce piety; for knowing the courtier's unlimited complaisance, and that his fortune takes the lead, and will command any sacrifice, he manages him with prudence, bears with him, and dissembles, lest the slave should run into hypocrisy or sacrilege: he expects better success from God and time than from his own zeal and industry.

It is an old custom in courts to give pensions, and to distribute favours to fiddlers, dancing-masters, players, flatterers, and cringing wretches: their merit is fixed, and their excellencies are conspicuous and important; they divert the great; it is known that Favier dances well, and that Lorenzani composes fine motets: but, on the contrary, who knows that the devoto

* The Author speaks of false devotion, once mightily in vogue at the French Court, from the example of King Lewis XIV.

has virtue? There is nothing for him on the privy purse or civil list, and that with very good reason; it is a profession easy to counterfeit, which, if it were rewarded, would often expose the prince to honour diffimulation and knavery, and to allow pensions for hypocrisy.

It is to be hoped that the devotion of the Court, such as it is, will at least oblige prelates to residence.

I doubt not but true devotion is the source of repose; it sweetens life, and reconciles us to death; advantages inconsistent with hypocrisy.

Every hour in itself, as it respects us in particular, is the only hour that is our's; when once it is past it is entirely lost; millions of ages do not bring it again: days, months, and years, are fled away, and irrecoverably lost in the abyss of time; time itself shall be destroyed; it is but a point in the immense space of eternity, and it shall be erased. There are several light and frivolous circumstances of time, which are unstable and pass away; such I call Fashions, grandeur, favour, riches, power, authority, dependence, pleasure, joy, and superfluity. What will become of these Fashions, when time itself shall disappear! Virtue alone, though of all things the least in Fashion, reaches beyond time.

OF CUSTOM.

SOME want a fortune to make them gentlemen.

Of these, some, could they put off their creditors but one half-year longer, had been gentlemen.

Others again rise up gentlemen, who were plebeians when they lay down.

How many gentlemen are there, whose fathers and elder brothers never pretended to the title?

Such a one prudently disowns his father, his farm or shop being known, and brags of his grandfather, against whom (having been long dead) there lyes no exception: he has a large estate, a great place, is married into a powerful family, and wants nothing but a patent* to make him a gentleman.

The king formerly was said to grant the title of Gentleman; the term of Grant was then a very proper and common expression, but now it is Gothic and obsolete: that of rehabilitation is the one in use, that is delicate French; a man who has got an estate is rehabilitated in his gentility; this intimates that he was originally a gentleman; that it is absolutely requisite he should be so; that his father, indeed, may have forfeited the title of ploughing, digging, peddling, or wearing a livery; but the son is now more than restored to the right of his ancestors, and is only continued in the possession of the same coat of arms they always had, though, perhaps, one of his own invention, and quite different from that on his

* The title of Gentleman is held by patent in France.

old pewter. In a word, it implies that a new grant would not suit him, being proper only for the plebeian, that is, the man who is still labouring after riches.

A man by often affirming he has seen some prodigy, persuades himself into its reality: another, by concealing his age, comes to believe at last he is as young as he would be thought: so a man of mean extraction, after an habitual talking of his being descended from some ancient baron or famous lord, has the ideal pleasure to fancy himself thus illustrious.

If a man be sprung from the meanest *canaille*, and has acquired an estate, can he want a coat of arms? and to this coat a crest, supporters, and motto? What is become of the distinction of salads and helmets? the name and use of them are abolished, it is no longer a dispute who should bear them in front or profile, close or open, and with what number of bars; such niceties are out of doors; the nobler coronets now are the vogue, we think we are worthy of them, and bestow them upon ourselves. Some of the better sort of citizens, indeed, have a little modesty still left, and use not the ducal coronet, humbly content with that of an earl; some of them have it at hand, it is only taking it from their signs to clap it upon their coaches.

Provided you are no citizen, you may be born in a thatched house, or in some old tower in the midst of a bog, it is only calling this a seat, and then you will be taken for a gentleman upon your own word.

A substantial gentleman would be thought a little lord, and he compasses his end. A great lord cannot be easy till he is dubbed a prince; he changes his coat of arms, produces a new genealogy which never saw the herald's office, arrogates to himself many great titles, has so many disputes about rank and precedence, that at last he is allowed to be a petty prince.

Some men are so fond of names, they give themselves three rather than fail; one may be called their town, another their country, and a third their office, name. Others are content with a name of two syllables, ennobling it with *du* or *de*, to give it a sound of dignity upon any improvement of circumstances; others again, by suppressing a syllable, make that name illustrious which was before vulgar. Many suppress their whole names*, though far from ignominious, adopting others of a fuller sound; and what they get by this is a disgraceful comparison with the great men from whom these names are borrowed. In short, there are some who, though born within the walls of Paris, will feign themselves to be Flemish or Italian, as if every country had not its beggars, lengthening their names with a foreign termination, as if a name were much the better for being far-fetched.

The want of money has reconciled the nobility and wealthy plebeians, and put an end to all disputes about coats of arms.

* M. L'Anglois, who changed his for that of *D'Imbrecourt*.

How many would be gainers by a law that should make gentility derivable from the mother, and how many more would be losers by it?

There are few families but what are at one end related to the sceptre, and at the other to the spade or loom.

I here declare it openly, and desire all men to take notice of it, that none may hereafter be surpris'd; if ever any great man shall think me worthy of his patronage, if ever I happen to make my fortune, there is one *Godfrey de la Bruyere*, whom all the chronicles of France place among the most distinguished nobility that followed Godfrey of Bouillon to the conquest of the Holy Land; this Godfrey shall then be the man from whom I am descended in a direct line.

If gentility be a virtue, the flagitious man loses his title; and if it be not a virtue, it is a trifle.

There are things which, upon a retrospect into their principle and first institution, are wonderful and incomprehensible. Who could imagine, for example, that these abbots, so dainty and so spruce, that the effeminacy, the futility and vanity of both sexes respectively centre in them, who insinuate themselves into the ladies' favour beyond any marquis or commissioner; who, I say, could imagine that such a man originally, and by the etymology of his name, was the head and father of a society of humble and holy men, who have devoted themselves to solitude, and to whom he should be

an example of self-denial and devotion? How powerful, how absolute, how tyrannical, is Custom! And, not to speak of greater disorders, is it not to be greatly feared that one day our young abbots will figure in grey-flowered velvet, like a certain cardinal, or paint and patch like women?

That the obscenities of the Gods, the Venus, the Ganymede, and all the other nudities of Caraccio, are pictures that have been drawn for the fathers of the church, and for men who style themselves successors of the Apostles, may be proved from the palace of Farnese.

There is no fine thing but loses something of its grace by being misplaced; no perfection without an agreeableness; no agreeableness but what is grounded on reason. A jig in a church, or the affected elocution of a player in a pulpit, would but offend our ears. Temples are not adorned with profane images*. A crucifix, for example, and the judgment of Paris, are never seen in the same holy place; nor, I hope, a churchman with the equipage and retinue of a general.

We hear of no vows nor pilgrimages made to any saint in order to attain a higher degree of benignity, gratitude, or equity; to cure us of our vanity, spleen, malignity, and avarice.

What can be more extravagant than for a number of Christians of both sexes, and those of the best sort, to frequent meetings for ap-

* Church tapestry.

plauding and rewarding a company of excommunicated persons, and excommunicated for the very pleasure they give. Methinks all theatres should be shut up, or the anathema against players repealed.

Parish duties amount to more for christening than for a confession, and are larger for a marriage than for a christening: one would think there was a tax laid upon the sacraments; and that they were rated *ad valorem*; yet, after all, there is no such thing: very far is it from the thoughts of the receivers to sell the sacraments, and the givers as little think they purchase them. Such an appearance of evil might, indeed, as well be laid aside, to avoid offending the weak, and being censured by the profane.

A rosy, jolly priest*, in health and vigour, the rector of a parish, sits in his laced surplice amongst the judges and magistrates in the first place of the church, where he terminates the concoction of a luxurious dinner; while the monk is glad to creep out of his desert or cell, to which decency and his own vow should confine him, and comes to preach before him and his flock, and is paid for his sermon as for any vendible commodity. The novelty and unexpectedness of such a censure startles you; you wonder at the impertinence of it, and are ready to ask me, whether I would deprive this

* M. de Blampignon; Priest of St Mederic, a mighty man with the ladies, and director of all the handsome women in his parish.

priest and his whole parish from hearing the word of God, and receiving the bread of life? No, by no means; I would have him himself preach that word, himself administer that bread to them, both in public and in private, in the churches, in the markets, and on the house-tops: and I would have none obtrude themselves into so awful and so important an office but with an intent and capacity of deserving the large offerings, and other emoluments belonging to it: their indulgence and neglect are, however, excusable. I am too severe: it is a Custom which he finds established, and which he will transmit in all its amplitude to his successors; but it is this strange, pernicious, and unwarrantable Custom which I will blame, which I can approve as little as that of his being paid four times for the same funeral; once for himself, a second time for his dues, a third for his presence, and a fourth for his officiating.

Titus has zealously served the church for these twenty years in a small living, and is not yet held worthy of any thing better amidst so many vacancies: neither his parts, the solidity of his doctrine, his exemplary life, nor the desire of many parishes, can carry it in his favour: another man starts up, as it were, from under ground, and is preferred before him. Titus is thus put off, yet no complaints come from him; it is the way of the world.

Who, says the vestry-keeper, shall pretend to make me rise to matins? am not I master

of the choir? My predecessor never went there; sure I am as good a man as ever he was. Shall I suffer my dignity to be undervalued, while I am in possession of it, or shall I leave it to my successor as I found it? I scorn the question; it is not, says the rector, my own interest which I regard, but the interest of the parish; it would be very hard that I, an upper canon, should be tied to hear the service, whilst the treasurer, the archdeacon, and even petty officers, think themselves exempt from it. It is my right, says the dean, and I insist on my part of the offerings, though I never officiate; have I not slept all night for these twenty years without being disturbed? I will go on in my old way, and my carriage shall be always answerable to my dignity; else what should I get by being head of the chapter? my example can be of no consequence. Thus each strives to be exempt from divine service, and to show, by a long omission, that he is under no obligation to it: there cannot be a more bustling emulation for any post or grant than betwixt these ecclesiastics who are most authorised to neglect their duty. The same harmony of the bells, in a still morning, which awakes the singing boys and choristers, serves to lull the canons into a more sound and pleasant sleep, pleasanter by delicious dreams; they rise late, and go to church to be paid for sleeping.

Who would ever imagine, did not experience daily show it, how difficult it is to persuade men to be happy? or, who would think

that there should be occasion for an order of men designed for that purpose, to prepare long speeches, to make use of all the tender exhortations, the awful imagery, they can think of; to study the enforcing emphasis and solemn air with which to deliver them; to use such gestures and contortions, that they are all in a sweat, and their spirits quite exhausted; who, I say, could imagine that all this was requisite (and possibly after all not essential) for bringing of a Christian, endowed with reason, and under a desperate sickness, to chuse rather to be eternally happy than to lose his soul?

Aristippus's daughter lyes dangerously ill; she sends for her father, begs a reconciliation, cannot be easy unless she dies in his favour. Will this wise man, the oracle of the whole town, take this reasonable and paternal step of his own accord? will he persuade his wife to do the same? No! both are inflexible, the director must be dealt with.

A mother, who makes a nun of her daughter, without any regard to her inclinations, takes upon herself the charge of another soul besides her own, and stands responsible for such a soul to GOD himself: that the mother may not be damned, the daughter must be saved.

A broken gamester marries his eldest daughter, and gives her all that he has left for her portion; the youngest is upon making herself a nun, and all the call she has to it is her father's ill luck.

There have been some maidens, unexcept-

tionable as to health, virtue, zeal, and other requisites of a good and lawful call, but who wanted money to devote themselves to poverty in a rich abbey.

To play the fool, and marry for love *, is to marry Melita, a pretty, virtuous, and prudent young woman, a good economist, and who has a real kindness for you, and less money than Ægina, who is offered you with an extraordinary portion, and extraordinary qualifications for lavishing it all away, and your own estate along with it.

Marrying formerly was a nice thing: it was a settlement for life, a serious business, and which deserved a great deal of consideration. A man was formerly to take his wife for better for worse; the same house, the same table, and the same bed, served them both: he was to be a husband all his lifetime: there was no coming off with a separate maintenance: they had no notion of reconciling a wife and family with any appearance of the relaxness and liberties of a single life.

The man who avoids being seen with a woman who is not his wife I commend for his discreet modesty: were he uneasy in the company of persons of a tainted reputation, that also I can see into. But what impertinent maggot can make him blush at his own wife? what makes him ashamed to be seen in public with one whom he has chosen for an inseparable

* Marquis de Richlieu.

companion? one from whom he should expect all the satisfaction and delight resulting from an affectionate union? one whom he loves and admires, who is his chief ornament, who does him no less honour by her extraction than by her wit, her merit, and her extraordinary virtue? why did he not begin by blushing at his marriage?

I am not unacquainted with the prevalence of Custom, with its unreasonable tyranny over the minds and manners of men, contrary to all reason; yet I find in myself such a stubborn audacity, that I could lead the woman who was my wife through the public walks, stare at me who would.

A young man is not to be ridiculed for marrying an old woman; it is sometimes prudence, a commendable resource against a greater evil. The infamy lyes in abusing his benefactress, in behaving like an ungrateful hypocrite to one who has chosen him as her guardian and comforter: if any dissembling be excusable, it is that of friendship: and, if deceit be allowable, it is on an occasion when truth would be cruelty. Ay, but she lives a deal longer than was expected. Was it then agreed, that she should give up the ghost just when she had cleared your debts, and made your fortune? after such a favour, is she become a clog? is a dose of laudanum the best draught? is it a crime in her to live? and if you should die before her, whose funeral you had so well contrived, and for whom you had designed the

finest pall, and the tolling of the biggest bell in the parish, must she be responsible for your disappointment?

There has, for some time, been a method of improving one's substance*, which is still practised by some of the best of men, and blamed by some of the best divines.

The commonwealth was ever saddled with certain offices, which seem to have been erected with no other design than to enrich one man at the expense of many; which cause a perpetual, and, sometimes, a very rapid, ebb in the fortunes of private men, and, shall I say it, from which any advantage is seldom or never reaped. Each of them † is a gulf, receiving the waters of many rivers, but disgorging none; perhaps dispersing itself imperceptibly through subterranean conduits, which yet abate nothing of the enormous height to which it is swelled by such various inlets, till it bears down its banks, and overflows its limits.

You have a piece of silver, that is not sufficient; no, nor a piece of gold neither. It is the quantity that must do the business. Add others to it if you can, improve them to bags, and leave the rest to me. You have neither birth nor wit; neither natural parts, nor any experience in the world; no matter, only increase your heap, and I will take care to place you on a level with your master, if you have one; and he must be some body indeed, if,

* Putting money out to use. † Scriveners.

with the help of your increasing métal, I do not raise you some degrees above him.

Oranta has been at law for these ten years : her pretensions are just, of the highest consequence, her whole fortune lyes at stake. Well, about five years hence she may know who her judges are to be, and at what court she is to dangle away the remaining years of her life.

The Custom which has crept into our courts of judicature, of interrupting the council, of checking his eloquence, or silencing his wit, of making him return to the matter of fact, and confining him to the bare proofs on which his client grounds his right, and by which the cause may be set in a clear artless light, is very much applauded ; and this harsh practice, by which an orator is restrained from florid digressions, which banishes eloquence from its natural places, and which will make our courts merely judicial, is authorised by a substantial reason, against which there is no exception, and that is, the dispatch of business. I could wish this reason took place elsewhere, that the very reverse was not manifest in the offices belonging to each respective court, and that the tautologous writings were curtailed, together with the diffuse harangues.

The duty of a judge consists in the administration of justice ; his trade is delaying it. Some judges understand their duty, and mind their trade.

Whoever solicits his judge does him no honour ; he questions his understanding and in-

tegrity; he endeavours to prepossess him; or else he desires of him a downright injustice.

Such is the temper of some judges; that with them interest, authority, intimacy, or relation, are a disadvantage to a cause; their delicacy of appearing above corruption or prejudice betrays them into an unjust decree.

The consequences of coquetry or gallantry in a magistrate are worse than those of debauchery: the debauched judge conceals his engagements; so that it is not known how to come at him; the other is approachable by a thousand professed weaknesses, and may be wrought upon by the means of every woman by whom he would be liked.

The administration of justice is very near as much respected in the commonwealth as the dispensation of holy mysteries; and the character of a lawyer is, in a manner, as sacred as that of a priest: a serjeant cannot dance at a ball, be seen at a play, wear a showy dress, without bringing contempt upon himself; one would wonder that a law should be necessary to regulate his carriage and his garb, and to compel him to a respectable deportment*.

There is no profession in which an apprenticeship is not necessary; consider the different stations of men, and it is manifest that, from the highest to the lowest, all have had a time in which they qualified themselves by practice and

* Counsellors are obliged to wear bands, by an order of Council obtained by President Harlay; before they wore cravats like other gentlemen.

experience, when faults were without consequence, or rather, those faults have been like so many steps to aptitude and perfection. War itself, which seems to spring from, and be continued by, confusion and disorder, what a variety of rules does it comprehend ! what a long time to discipline the soldier, to form the officer ! and what a genius and experience is necessary to superintend its operations, and destroy with method ! Thus the warrior has his school, why must the magistrate have none ? There are established practices, there are laws and Customs, but why no time for reading them ? or not a sufficient space to digest them ? No ; momentous as the concern is, there is no noviciate ; and the first essay of a youth who, raw from school, mounts the tribunal, and whom his bags have made a judge *, is to decide sovereignly in such cases, on which no less than our lives and fortunes depend.

The chief qualification of an orator is probity ; without it he is no more than a verbose declaimer ; he extenuates or exaggerates matters of fact, he is false in his quotations, his mouth foams with calumnies, he adopts all the injustice and malice of his client, and may be ranked among those advocates, of whom Martial says, *Iras & verba locant*.

It is true, says one, this sum is his due, or his claim is indisputable ; but I know where to have him : there is a certain little matter of

* The judges' places in most courts in France are bought and sold.

form, wherein, if he fails within time, he can never retrieve his fault, and, consequently, loses his debt, and his claim is superseded: now, this matter of form will never come into his head. Such a conscience as this makes an accomplished pettifogger.

A prudent, reasonable, and excellent maxim, for all courts of judicature, and infinitely beneficial to the public, would be the reverse of that which prefers form to equity.

The rack is an admirable invention, an infallible method for taking off the innocent man, whose misfortune it is to be of a weak constitution, and for saving the guilty, whose hardy limbs can stand the trial.

The punishment of a villain is an example for his fellows: in the condemnation of an innocent person * all honest men are concerned.

I was about saying, because I am not a thief nor a murderer, I shall never be punished as such. A hasty inference!

Deplorable is the condition of an innocent person who, by precipitation in his trial, has been found guilty. Can even that of his judge be more dismal?

* The Marquis de Langlade, innocent, yet sentenced to the gallies, where he died. Le Brun put to the torture, under which he expired. The former was charged with robbing the Duke de Montmorency, whereas the robber had been his chaplain; and, being afterwards discovered, was executed. The other's supposed crime was the murder of Madame Mazel, for which he was put to the torture; the murderer has since appeared to be a natural son of that unfortunate gentlewoman.

Should I read, that in former ages one of those magistrates, appointed to apprehend and extirpate rogues and thieves, had been long acquainted with the most dangerous, that he knew their names and faces, had an account of their walks, and of the time, places, and booty, of every particular depredation, and had so great a share and controul in their proceedings, that, to prevent the noise * some great man was about to make for the loss of a jewel, he could produce it for a small reward; and that this knowing magistrate had been tried by the parliament, condemned, and executed; I shall class such a relation with many others in history, which time has made incredible. How then should I believe that it may now be inferred from fresh and notorious circumstances, that there is still such a pernicious connivance, and that it is looked upon as a thing of course, and made a jest of?

How many are imperious towards the weak, cannot be moved by compassion, turn the deaf ear to the intreaties of the poor, have no regard for the commonalty, are rigid and severe in things of no moment, will not accept of the least gratification, nor be persuaded by their dearest friends and nearest relations, and whom women only can corrupt.

It is not absolutely impossible for a man in great favour to lose a cause.

* M. de St Ponange had a diamond buckle, which had been stole from him at the opera, brought to him by the Provost-general.

A dying man, speaking in his last will, may expect to be heard like an oracle : his words will be taken in different senses : men will put their own constructions upon them ; such constructions, I mean, as most favour their interest and inclinations.

There are some men of whom one may truly say, that death does not so much settle their last will, as it puts a period to their unsteadiness and inconstancy ; an angry fit while they are living sets them in a hurry to prepare a will, which, when their passion wears off, is torn and burnt : their closet has as many wills as almanacs, every year is sure to produce a new one : the second is annulled by a third, which is made as insignificant by another more exact ; and the validity of this also is destroyed by a fifth. Yet the last decides, if opportunity or power is wanting in the person whose interest it is to reverse it ; he must stand to all its clauses and conditions : for, what can more clearly prove the intention of a man, however changeable, than a last deed under his own hand, and, since the signature of which he has not had time to will the contrary ?

Were there no wills to regulate the rights of heirs and successors, I question whether men would need any tribunal to adjust their pretensions and disputes ; the function of a judge would almost be reduced to the sanguinary part of it, sentencing thieves and murderers to the wheel and gallows. Who are continually soliciting our magistrates, and make such a stir

before their doors, in their halls, and at the courts? Heirs at law? No; their rights are fixed and palpable. These crowds are legatees, contending about the meaning of a word, or a clause in a last will; or disinherited persons, who find fault with a will drawn up with circumspection, after mature deliberation, by a grave, a wise, and conscientious man, and not without the help of good counsel; with a deed, in which a cunning notary has displayed all his skill to make it firm and irrevocable, and has omitted none of the cramp words and subtleties which distinguish his profession; a deed which is signed by the testator, which is witnessed in all the necessary forms, and which a judge, notwithstanding all this, thinks fit to reverse and make void.

Titius * hears a will read with tears in his eyes; is overcome with grief for the loss of a friend, by whose death he is like to raise his fortune. By one clause he makes him his successor in a good office; by another he bestows on him all his tenements in the city; by a third a fine seat in the country; and by a fourth he makes him master of a house richly furnished, and seated in the best part of the town, with all

* M. Hennequin, Attorney-general, had been made sole legatee by Madame Valentin, a counsellor's wife, whose end was no more than appointing him a trustee, not doubting but he would understand it as such, and deliver up his trust: but M. Hennequin being for keeping all to himself, and putting all his family in mourning, M. Valentin trumped up another will, which reversed the former, as more agreeable to the supposed intentions of the deceased.

its appurtenances. His grief increases, the tears stream: how indeed is it possible he should refrain? He is now one of his majesty's chief officers, has his city and country house, his furniture is answerable, he is to keep his coach, and a noble table; *Was there ever an honest, a better man than my poor dead friend?* But, hold! here is a codicil which must be also read: this codicil transfers all these things to Mævius, and sends Titius back to his garret, without post, house, land, or money; the poor fellow must even walk on foot as before. Titius wipes his tears; it is now Mævius's part to weep.

Does not the law, in forbidding to kill, include poisoning as well as stabbing, drowning as well as burning, private assaults as well as open violence, and every action tending to homicide? Did the law, which restrains husbands and wives from giving any thing to each other, relate only to direct and immediate ways of giving? has it made no provision against those that are indirect? was it designed for the introduction of trustees? does it so much as tolerate such an evasion? When the dearest of wives outlives her husband, does a man bequeath his estate to a trusty friend as an acknowledgment of his friendship? or is it not rather as a mark of his entire confidence that he will be true to his trust? Will a man make over his estate to one whom he has the least ground to suspect will not restore it to the person for whom it is really intended? Is a contract or an oath necessary in such a collu-

sion? must he so much as intimate to the trustee what he is to do? and does not every man feel within his own breast what is expected in such a case? But if, on the contrary, the property of this estate is fallen to this trusty friend, why does he suffer in his reputation by detaining it? what mean, here, these satires and lampoons? why is he compared to one that betrays his trust, or to a servant robbing his master of a sum of money he had sent by him to some other person? I see no reason for it. Where lyes the shame of not performing a piece of generosity, and of a man's keeping for his own use what is lawfully his! How great is the perplexity, how intolerable the burden of such a trust! If a man, out of reverence to the laws of his country, appropriates to himself such a trust, he can no longer be thought an honest man: if respecting a deceased friend he fulfils his intentions, and restores what has been given him in trust for his widow, he must make use of oblique practices, and transgress the law. The law then must differ strangely from the opinions of men; it may be so, but it is not safe for me to arraign either.

Typhon supplies a certain nobleman with horses, dogs, and what not; and on that lord's protection he sticks at no violence, no crime whatever; and, in defiance of law, kills, burns, and destroys; amidst such enormities his patron is his sanctuary: the King at last must take upon himself the care of chastising this countenanced villain.

Ragouts, cordials, fricasees, ambigues, and kickshaws, are words which should be exotic and unintelligible to us: and if these are not fit to be mentioned even amidst the festivities of peace, as incentives to luxury and gluttony, how come they in such general vogue, amidst the desolations of war, and amidst public calamities, at a siege, or on the very night before a battle? where do we find any mention made of Scipio's or Marius's table? show me that Miltiades, Epaminondas, or Agesilaus, were ever nice and costly in their diet. I would have no man to commend a general for the elegance or sumptuousness of his table but as a slight circumstance, and, after expatiating with truth on his intrepidity, successes, and humanity, after all solid praise was exhausted; nay, I could be glad to see a general avoiding that commendation as out of character.

Hermippus * makes himself a slave to what he calls his little conveniencies; all usages, customs, fashions, nay decency itself, must fall a sacrifice to them; he seeks them in every thing; discards a less for a greater, and not one is neglected that is practicable; they are his whole study; there is not a day but what produces some new contrivance of this kind: others may have their set dinners and suppers; as for his part, his stomach rises at the very name of them; he eats when he is hungry, and only of what he likes best; he must see his bed made, but the nicest chambermaid could never make

* M. Daffville.

it to his mind. He seldom goes abroad; loves to keep his chamber, where he is neither idle nor busy, where, in the garb of a man that has taken physic, he is continually employed in doing nothing. Others must wait the leisure of a smith or a joiner, according to their occasions; as for him, he has every thing at hand; he keeps a file, a saw, and pincers, for all emergencies; there is not a mechanical tool which he has not, and, to be sure, infinitely better than any belonging to workmen; he has some new and unknown, for which he has no name, of his own contrivance, and of many he has forgot the use; there is no man to be compared to him for dispatch in work. He was forced to take ten steps to go from his bed to his wardrobe; he has now so contrived his chamber as to reduce these ten to nine: what a saving of steps is here during the whole course of his life! With others it is usual to turn the key, thrust or pull, before the door open; what a fatigue is this! Here is one unnecessary motion of which he eases himself! By what means? It is a mystery which he keeps to himself, as he is profoundly intelligent in springs, and is a great master of mechanics, such mechanism, at least, as the world can be very well without. Hermippus brings light to his apartment another way than through the window; he has already a nostrum for going up and down the house otherwise than by the stairs, and is now studying how to go in and out with more conveniency than by the door.

It is a long while since physicians have been decried and employed; the keenness of satire, and the wit of the stage, cannot diminish their fees: nobility are glad to marry their daughters; we see their sons judges and bishops; and all this is paid for by those very persons who in health ridicule them: yet upon falling sick they want a man whose trade it is to assure them that they shall not die. As long as men may die, and are desirous to live, the physician will still be rallied and careffed.

A good physician is he that has specifics; or if he wants them himself, allows those that have them to cure his patient.

To the temerity of quacks, and their innumerable miscarriages, is owing the vogue of physick and physicians; you die under one, and the others kill you.

Astrologers and fortune-tellers, such as draw schemes, and calculate nativities, such as guess at things past by the motion of a sieve, such as shew futurity in a looking-glass, or in a glass of fair water, are publicly tolerated; and these cheats are not without their use; they inspirit the conceited young fellows with promises of preferment, and the maids may be sure of having their sweethearts; they comfort those children whose fathers are too long a-dying, and lull asleep the frettings of young wives languishing under old husbands: in a word, they cheat at a very easy rate any that have a mind to be cheated.

What is to be thought of magic and sorcery?

the theory of it is dark and intricate, its principles wild and uncertain, it seems to be a chaos of illusion, yet does not want some perplexing facts affirmed by men of sagacity and reputation, who either saw or learned them from others of no less credit than themselves: to admit them all, or deny them, seems equally inconvenient; and, I dare say, that in this, as in all other deviations from the common course of nature, there is a rational medium to be held between a simple credulity and an obstinate rejection.

Infancy can scarce be overburthened with languages, and, methinks, the utmost care should be taken to teach them to children; there is no condition of life in which these are not useful; they facilitate the acquisition of solid knowledge, and diversify the entertainments of polite literature. If this kind of study, which requires no little application, is put off till a few years more bring on youth, either they do not undertake it by choice, or are soon discouraged by the jejuneness and difficulty; besides, it is consuming that time in words, which by nature is designed for actions, and implies the loss of those years which are best adapted for improvements to be collected by memory. So great and so necessary a foundation can never rightly be laid, unless when the soul is naturally susceptible of deep impressions; when the memory is vacant, quick, and steady; when the mind is void of ideas, and the heart of passions; and when they at whose disposal we are have

an eye over us, and force an application. I am persuaded that the paucity of true scholars, and the shoals of superficial ones, are occasioned by the neglect of this practice.

The study of texts can never be sufficiently recommended; it is the shortest, the surest, and the pleasantest, way to all kinds of learning. Take things at the best hand; go to the very source; ruminate and digest the text over and over; get it by heart, quote it upon occasions; above all, apply yourself to reach the sense of it in its full latitude, and in all its circumstances; reconcile an author's sentiments, digest his principles, draw yourself the consequences from them: the first commentators were in no other case than what I recommend to you: never offer to borrow their light, or to adopt notions, unless it be when you are absolutely at a loss; their interpretations are not your's, and may easily slip out of your memory; your observations, on the contrary, arising from your own mind, will abide with you, and more readily recur in conversation, in disputes and consultations. Let it be your pleasure to see you are not gruelled in your reading by any but unsurmountable difficulties, but such where commentators and scholiasts themselves are at a stand; men, that otherwise overflow with a parade of learning, and triumph in passages which need no exposition. This method of studying will convince you that men's laziness is the thing which has encouraged pedantry to increase the bulk of libraries rather than the

worth of them, and to crush the text under the weight of comments; and that in this it has injured itself, and destroyed its dearest interest, inasmuch as it has multiplied that reading, those inquiries, and that labour, which it endeavoured to avoid.

What is it that directs men in their way of living, and in their diet? is it health and sobriety? that is a question. There are whole nations * that eat fruit first, and meat afterwards, while others do quite the contrary: some begin their meal with one kind of fruit, and end it with another. Is it custom or reason? is it for health's sake that men wear their clothes up to their chin, that they put on a ruff or a band, after going for so many ages quite open-breasted? Is it a regard to decency, especially in a time when they have found a way to appear naked in their full dress? and, on the other side, women that show their breasts and their shoulders, are they of a less tender constitution than men, or less obliged to decency? An odd kind of modesty this, which enjoins them to hide their legs and their feet, and at the same time gives them leave to let their arms be naked up to the elbow? How came men to think heretofore that either assailing or defending was the end of going to war? and who advised them to wear such arms as were both offensive and defensive? and on what account are these laid aside? Is it not preposterous that men put on boots to go to a ball, and stand

* French and Spaniards.

without any armour, in a quilted doublet, exposed to all the fire of a counterescarp.

OF THE PULPIT.

PREACHING is now a-days become a mere show, in which there is not the least appearance of that evangelic gravity which is the very soul of it; an insinuating mien, a modulation of the voice, exactness of gesture, choice of expression, and a cadence of periods, supply its place; but with what efficacy! To attend seriously on the dispensation of the word of life is no longer thought of: going to church is an amusement, among a thousand others; and preaching a diversion: the preachers play the prize, and the hearers bett upon their heads.

Profane eloquence is transferred from the bar, where it is become obsolete, to the Pulpit, where it should never be suffered to approach.

The prize of eloquence is fought even at the altar, and before the holy mysteries: every hearer thinks himself a judge of the preacher, to censure or applaud him, and is no more converted by the man he favours than by him whom he condemns. The orator pleases some and not others; but in this agrees with all, that as to render them better is not in his thoughts, so they never trouble their heads about becoming so.

The docile apprentice is attentive to his master, profits by his instructions, and becomes

himself a master of his profession ; but man, more untoward, censures the preacher's discourses, and the philosopher's essays, and improves himself neither in religion nor speculation.

Till the desirable return of that man *, who, in a style formed on the holy scriptures, by long study and converse with them, shall explain to the people the Word of God genuinely and familiarly ; till then, I say, it is to be expected that orators and declaimers will be followed.

Quotations from profane authors, puns, a false pathos, antitheses, and hyperboles, are out of doors : elaborate portraits will one day follow them, and give way to a plain exposition of the Gospel, accompanied with other means that effect conversion.

At length the man for whom I have so impatiently wished, but whom I durst not hope for in our age, is come ; the courtiers, from a delicacy of taste, and a love of propriety, have extolled him up to the skies ; and, what is almost incredible, have left the King's chapel to mix themselves with the crowd, and hear the Word of God preached by this truly apostolic man † : the city took an opposite turn ; in whatever church he preached, there not one of the parishioners were to be found ; the very churchwardens left their seat : the pastors, indeed, stuck to him, but the flocks were scattered among the congregations of the neighbour-

* M. Tourniau.

† Father Seraphin, a Capuchin.

ing orators. This is no more than what I ought to have foreseen, and not in the fervour of exultation have advanced, that such a man, whenever he appeared, would be universally followed and revered; my acquaintance with the world should have taught me better. It is for these thirty years your rhetoricians, declaimers, and especially your portrait drawers, have been the only men in request. It is not long since sermons were stuffed with points and witticisms, which might have served for tolerable epigrams: now, I confess, these are a little reduced, and superseded by the ballad style. Three things these men never fail to cry are absolutely necessary, and infinitely worthy your attention: one thing they geometrically prove in the first part of their discourse, another in the second, and another in the third; so that you are to be convinced of the truth which makes their first doctrinal point; of another truth, which is the second point; and then of a third truth, the subject of their third point. In this manner the first reflection will instruct you in one of the fundamental principles of your holy religion; the second in another principle, a not less fundamental; and the last reflection in the third principle, and the most important of all, but which, for want of leisure, is reserved for another opportunity: in a word, to recapitulate and abridge this division, and to form a scheme of — What! still more! cry you? new matter! so here is half an hour's logic more coming on! these gentlemen only puzzle the

cause. I am of your mind, it is the natural effect of such a jumble of ideas, which might all be contracted into one, without any burden to the memory, or perplexity to the apprehension. To see them constantly affect and persist in this oratory, one would almost think that the grace of conversion was tied up to such long-winded Spinosities: but how is it possible we should be converted by apostles whom we cannot understand? I could find in my heart to cry out to them, Suspend your impetuous career, to give the audience and yourselves a short breathing time: but I may spare my clamours! The Homilies are out of date, the very Basils, the Chrysostoms, could not restore them: we should fly into other dioceses, out of the reach of the abject flatness of their home-spun discourses. The generality must be served with fine phrases and well-turned periods; they admire what they do not understand; suppose themselves edified, and, without any advancement in virtue, content themselves with some irrational sensations at an unmeaning magniloquence.

It was not an age ago since a French book was a number of Latin pages, with here and there a line or two of French scattered in each page: nor did this humour of citing stop here. Ovid and Catullus, at the bar, decided sovereignly in cases of marriages and wills, and were as serviceable to the widows and orphans as the Pandects: the sacred and profane authors were inseparable, and seemed to have shared

the Pulpit. St Cyril and Horace, St Cyprian and Lucretius, spoke by turns; the poets were positively of the same opinion with St Austin, and the rest of the Fathers. Latin was the language chosen to instruct women and church-wardens with, and sometimes Greek: there was no preaching so wretchedly without a prodigious accumulation of learning. The times are changed, and the custom altered; the text still continues in Latin, but the sermon is in French, and that of the greatest purity; the scripture is not so much as once quoted. There must be little learning now to preach very well.

School divinity is at last drove out of the Pulpits of all the great towns in the kingdom, and confined only to the country villages, for the instruction and edification of the ploughman and vine-dresser.

The man * must have some wit who can charm the people by his florid style, who can make morality divert them, who tickles them with poignant allusions and lively descriptions; but, after all, he has not so much wit as he should have. One that has a truer sort neglects these grotesque ornaments, so foreign to the Gospel; and preaches naturally, forcibly, and like a Christian.

The orator † gives to some sins such a bril-

* The Abbot Bavyn.

† Abbé Bouin, very much given to portraits in the Pulpit, otherwise a fine preacher; but the itch of gaming spoiled his preferment, for which he stood very fair both as to merit and interest.

liant colouring, and represents the sinner in the commission of them to have so much wit, air, address, and delicacy, that, for my part, if I have no inclination to resemble his pictures, I have, at least, occasion to betake myself to some preacher who, in a more Christian style, may excite my disgust against the vices of which the other had made so seductive a description.

A fine sermon, so called, is a piece of oratory most exactly modified by the rules and patterns of human eloquence, and tricked up with all the decorations of rhetoric; to the connoisseurs there is not a passage or a thought lost; they easily follow the orator in all his flowery digressions, in all his high-flown speculations: it is a riddle to none but the common people.

O the judicious and admirable discourse *! how nervously were the most essential points of religion, as well as the strongest motives to conversion, discussed! Sure it cannot fail of the happiest impressions on the audience! Ah! I perceive the blessed effect; they are moved, they give vent to their admiration, and confess from their souls——What! that this sermon of Theodorus excels even his last!

An indulgent relax morality has no effect, nor is the preacher ever respected †; it neither rouses nor engages the attention of the men of the world, who are not so averse to a rigid

* Father Bourdaloue. See *Lives of the French Writers*

† M. Flechier, Bishop of Nismes.

doctrine as some people think; but, on the contrary, love it in the person whose duty it is to preach it: in this the church has two opposite species of members; one declaring truth in all its divine amplitude, without disguise or respect of persons; the other hearing it with pleasure, with satisfaction, with admiration, with applause, but never practising a word of it.

The heroic virtue of great men* may be reproached with this, that it has corrupted eloquence, or, at least, enervated the style of most preachers; who, instead of exciting in the people praises to Heaven for its extraordinary gifts on those persons, have enrolled themselves among the authors and poets, and become panegyrist; have even out-flattered their verses and dedications; they have turned the Word of God into one chain of praises, which, if just, are misplaced, partial, selfish, and disagreeable to their own character; a mighty matter, if, while they celebrate their heroes in the sanctuary, they once make mention of God, or recommend religion, which is the whole of their duty. Some † are known to have restrained the Gospel, which ought to be common to all, to the presence of a single auditor; to have been so disconcerted when any accident has kept him

* Against funeral sermons.

† Abbé Roquette, being to preach before the King on Holy Thursday, had prepared a compt discourse, full of high-flown encomiums on his Majesty, who was to be present; but the unlucky arrival of an express detaining the King, the encomiast, disconcerted at the absence of his subject, wanted spirit to mount the Pulpit.

away, that they could not deliver a Christian discourse before a Christian assembly, because it was not made for them; but have been supplied by other orators, who hastily ran over a few extemporary exhortations, or rambling addresses, to the Divine Being.

Theodulus has succeeded better than was feared by some of his hearers; his discourse has gratified them; he has pleased them infinitely more than he could have done if he had charmed their ears or their minds; he has soothed their jealousy.

Oratory and war in this are alike; full of danger, but leading rapidly to preferment.

If you are of a certain quality, and are sensible that you have no other talent but preaching, and that very poorly, still preach though ever so poorly. There is no rising without getting a name. There is Theodotus, he has brought his dull delivery, and duller matter, to a rare market.

Some have been preferred to bishoprics for their preaching, whose talent that way would not procure them, at this time, so much as a prebendary.

There is a certain panegyrist, himself loaded with encomiums; they are stuck up in the streets, where they raise the sneers of all men of sense. Only compare the man with these bills and advertisements, and you find that in the enumeration of all his endowments two are omitted, insipidity and obscurity.

The idleness of women, and the folly of men,

in gadding after them, give reputation to some pitiful preachers, and, for a while, support the sinking credit of others.

Are greatness and power the only qualities which entitle a man to praise at his funeral *, and that before the holy altar, and from the Pulpit, the throne of truth? is there no other greatness than that derived from title or birth? why is it not a standing law, that whoever was eminent in benevolence, probity, meekness, devotion, and piety, should, at his interment, be honoured with formal praises? What is called a *funeral sermon* is now-a-days but coldly received by most of the auditors, if not very different from a Christian discourse; or rather, if not very nearly resembling Pagan panegyric.

The orator preaches to get a bishopric; the Apostle to save souls. The latter deserves what the other aims at.

We have seen some of our clergymen come up to town out of the country, after no long residence, big with the vanity of having made those converts who were either made to their hands, or never will be so; we have seen them, I say, equal themselves to the St Vincents and the Xaviers; fancy themselves apostles, and think an abbey a sorry reward for their successful labours in the ministry.

A man starts up on a sudden, and, without any previous thought, takes pen, ink, and paper, and, flushed with conceit, says, I will turn author: he has no talent for it, but he un-

* Against abuses of funeral sermons.

luckily wants fifty sols. I would dissuade him from it. Dioscorus, say I, take a saw, or some other tool, work at a handicraft, you will be sure of earning some little matter every day. Who, I! thank you for such low-lived advice; besides, tools are without my tether. Why then, copy, transcribe, correct the press; but whatever you do, by no means write. Yes, but I will write, and get it printed too. Then he sets himself to scribble over a quire or two of such stuff as this: That the river Seine runs through the city of Paris; that there are seven days in the week; that it rains; that it is stormy weather, or such important secrets: and this treatise, containing nothing contrary to religion or the government, nor of any evil tendency but to vitiate the public taste, and reconcile it to dull and insipid compositions, passes the licenser, is printed, and, to the shame of the age, and to the mortification of all sterling authors, is in a short time reprinted. Just so, another wiseacre resolves in himself that he will preach, and preaches; whereas he is devoid of every talent, and who would might fill the Pulpit, if he did not want a benefice.

A worldly profane clergyman does but declaim when he preaches.

On the contrary, there are some holy men, whose character carries persuasion with it: they appear, and the whole audience dispose themselves to the most serious attention; already their hearts throb with devout sensations: the sermon completes their happiness.

The Bishop of Meaux *, and Father Bourdaloue, recal to my mind Demosthenes and Cicero. Both of them, as they are absolute masters of the eloquence of the Pulpit, have had the fate of other great models: the one in a great many rancorous censurers, and the other in a great many bad imitators.

The eloquence of the Pulpit, with respect to what is merely human, and put in play by the genius of the orator, lyes deep, is known but to few, and attained with difficulty; what a delicacy of art is required to please, at the same time that you convince! You are obliged to keep to beaten paths, to say what has been said, and what is foreseen that you would say; the subjects are great, but they are trite and common; the principles, indeed, certain, but the inferences every one of the auditory perceives at the first glance; some of the subjects are sublime, but who can treat of the sublime! there are mysteries to be explained, but they are better explained in a college lecture than in a rhetorical harangue: the morals, too, of the Pulpit, though they comprehend matter as vast and diversified as the manners of men, yet all turn upon the same hinge, exhibit the same imagery, but are restrained to much narrower limits than wanton satire:

* M. Bossuet, Preceptor to the Dauphin, a celebrated author, preacher, and controversialist, and perpetually decried and crossed by the Jesuits; his implacable asperity against the good Fenelon was a great flaw to the lustre of his eminent qualities.

after the common invective against honours, riches, and pleasures, there remains no more for the orator to do but to close up his discourse, and dismiss the assembly. There may sometimes be emotions, or possibly tears; but let the character and genius of the preacher be considered, and perhaps it will be found that it is the subject preaches itself, and a sense of our supreme concern which produces these agitations; and that it was not so much any true eloquence, as the strong lungs of the missionary, that warmed our frozen affections. In short, the preacher is not upon a level with the lawyer, in facts always new, various transactions, and unheard-of adventures; he is not to start perplexing questions, to improve probable conjectures, all which yet elevate the genius, and exert its force in a spacious range, and instead of putting a constraint on eloquence, only fix and direct it. He, on the contrary, must draw his discourse from a spring known to all; if he deviates from his common places he ceases to be popular; he is either abstruse, or a declaimer; he does not preach the Gospel; all he has occasion for is a noble simplicity, but that must be laboured after; it is a singular talent, and above the reach of ordinary men: the genius, fancy, learning, and memory, with which some plume themselves, are so far from helps, that they often put them upon a wrong bias.

The law is a laborious, toilsome profession, and requires, besides a vast compass of know-

ledge, a never-failing sagacity and invention ; he is not like the preacher, provided with a number of harangues composed at leisure, got by heart, and repeated with authority, without contradiction, and which, with a few alterations, serve more than once ; his pleadings are new, spoke before judges who may silence him, and against adversaries who are on the catch ; his replies must be ready, solid, and poignant, besides, in one and the same day he pleads in several courts, and causes quite dissimilar ; his house is no quiet retreat for him ; it is open to all comers who crowd upon him with their difficult or fallacious cases ; he is not put to bed, rubbed down, nor supported with cordials ; his chamber is no rendezvous for people of all qualities and sexes to congratulate him upon the beauty of his style, the sublimity of his sentiments, and the force of his argumentations : after a short repose from the fatigues of the bar he must ruminate on tedious writings ; his trouble continues, he only varies his fatigues : I may venture to say he is in his profession what the first apostolic men were in theirs.

Having thus distinguished the eloquence of the bar from the profession of the lawyer, and the eloquence of the Pulpit from the office of the preacher, it will appear, I believe, that it is easier to preach than to plead, but more difficult to preach well than to plead well.

What a vast advantage has a delivered discourse over a written composition ! Men are

imposed upon by voice and gesture; any little prepossession in favour of the speaker raises their admiration. Now for something curious, say they; and after this commendation, dose all sermon time, and yet at waking applaud the preacher. An author has no such warm sticklers; his works are read either in the leisure of the country, or the solitude of a closet; there are no public meetings appointed to raise his name, and decry his rivals, no juntos to advance him to the prelacy; his book, how excellent soever, is read, but with a determined intention to find it indifferent; it is perused, it stands a fiery trial, is compared and examined; it is not a transient sound, lost in the air, and forgotten; what is printed remains so; sometimes it is expected a month or two before the publication, merely with an impatience to damn it, and the greatest pleasure many will find in it is their own criticisms; it galls them to meet with passages in every page which ought to please, they are afraid of being diverted, and throw by a book only because it is good. Every body does not pretend to be a preacher, the elocution and figure, memory, the gown, and obligations of a divine, are what many will not pretend to or take upon them; whereas every one imagines that he thinks well, and that he can express himself still better than he thinks, and thence arises a jealousy and asperity against one that thinks and writes as well as himself; in a word, the sermon-monger is advanced to a bishopric sooner than the most

judicious writer gets a small priory; new favours are still heaped on him, while the more deserving author takes up with his leavings.

If it happens that the wicked hate and persecute you, good men advise you to humble yourself before GOD, and to watch against the vanity which may arise in you from having displeased people of that character; so when the hypocritics, whom nothing can please, and are themselves most insupportable, take to pieces your works, or your discourses, whether spoken at the bar or in the Pulpit, humble yourself, for of all the temptations to pride there cannot be a greater.

A preacher, methinks, ought in every one of his sermons to make choice of one capital truth, whether to raise terror, or convey instruction; to analyze it thoroughly, yet omitting all those fine-spun divisions and subdivisions, always intricate, and mostly useless. I would not have him presuppose a thing that is notoriously false, which is, that the *Beau Monde* understand the religion they profess, or be deterred from composing catechisms for these knowing head-pieces or subtile geniuses; the hours that others waste in composing a set, formal discourse, let him employ in making himself so far master of his subject, that the expression and gesture may of course flow easily from him; let him, after some necessary preparation, give himself up to his own genius, and to the emotions with which a great subject will inspire him; away with those excreffive efforts of memory, which look more

like reciting for a wager than a divine affair, and which shackle all graceful action, but let him kindle into a noble enthusiasm, dart conviction into the soul, and alarm the conscience; let him, in fine, possess the hearts of his hearers with another fear than that of seeing him make some blunder, or halt, in his sermon.

Let not him who is not yet arrived to such perfection as to forget himself in the dispensation of the holy Word, let not him, I say, be discouraged by the austere rules prescribed him, as if they robbed him of the means of showing his wit, and of attaining the honours to which he aspires: what more useful, more exalted, talent can there be, or which would better become the mitre, than to preach like an Apostle? Was Fenelon* unworthy of that dignity? was it possible he should have escaped his prince's choice but for another choice.

OF LIBERTINES.

HAVE the Libertines, who value themselves so much upon the title of wits, have they, I say, wit enough to perceive that they are only called so by Irony? What greater want of wit can there be, than to be doubtful of the principle of one's being, life, sense, knowledge, and of the proper end

* Preceptor to the Duke of Burgundy, Archbishop of Cambray, one of the Council of Conscience, and a creature of Madame Maintenon; he was author of *Telemachus*, of which the fine moral sentiments were exemplified in his truly Christian life.

of them? what can more debase any man than a question whether his soul is not material, like the stone or worm, or subject to corruption like the vilest creatures? And is it not more rational and generous to open our minds to the ravishing idea of a Being superior to all other beings, by whom and for whom all things were made? a Being absolutely perfect, self-existent, without beginning or end, of whom our soul is the image, of whom, if I may so speak, it is a part, as spiritual and immortal?

I call those men degenerate, worldly, or brutish, whose hearts and minds are wholly fixed on this minute part of the universe they are placed in the earth; who are wrapt up in its objects without any concern of superior things; whose souls are as much confined as that narrow spot of ground they call their estate, the extent of which is measured, the acres numbered, and whose bounds are known to all the neighbourhood. So far from wondering that such, who lean as it were on an atom, should stumble at the first step in their search after truth; that with such a confused sight they should not reach beyond the heavens and the stars, to behold God himself; that not being able to perceive the excellency of what is spiritual, or the dignity of the soul, they should be as little sensible how difficult it is to satisfy it, how much the whole world is inferior to it, how necessary to it is an all-perfect Being, which is God, and how absolutely it needs a religion to find out that God, and to be assured of his rea-

tity: I say, so far from wondering, I readily comprehend that to men of such a cast it is natural to fall into incredulity or scepticism, and to make no more of God and religion than a piece of policy, conducive to the order and decorum of this world; the only thing, in their estimate, worth thinking on.

Some, by their travels, only give the finishing stroke to the depravation of their judgment and morals, to the extinction of the little religion they set out with; they meet daily with new forms of worship, new rites and ceremonies: they are not unlike those who wander from shop to shop before they have resolved what kind of stuff to buy, the variety puzzles their choice, so that meeting with no piece which irresistibly takes their fancy, they come away without buying.

There are some men who defer religion and devotion till such time as lewdness and impiety are in universal vogue; and scorning any thing vulgar, they will distinguish themselves from the crowd; in so serious and so important a matter singularity pleases them; in light things, which are of no consequence, they are conformable; they have, for ought I know, already placed a sort of magnanimity and spirit in running the risk of futurity.

A man in health questions whether there is a God; but simple fornication, to be sure, cannot be a sin: when he is sick, and given over, his misgiving is discarded, and he believes in God.

Your wits and Libertines should examine

themselves thoroughly before they set up for such, in order to determine, at least, according to their own principles, that they will die as they have lived; or if they find their fortitude would shrink at such a trial, to resolve to live as they would wish to die.

Jesting in a dying man is very unseasonable; if on certain subjects it is dreadful. To leave our survivors a jest at the expense of one's own eternal happiness, is being miserable in the abstract.

Let prejudice make you fancy what you please of a future state, dying is still a very serious work, which calls for firmness more than jesting or raillery.

There have been in all ages many persons of agreeable talents and extensive literature, who, servilely addicted to great men, have adopted their wild notions, and groaned under their yoke all their lifetime against their own knowledge and consciences; who never lived but for other men, the humouring of whom, one would think, they had accounted the chief end of their creation; who were ashamed to be seen to bestow a thought on their salvation, and to appear outwardly such as they were, perhaps, in their hearts, who have run headlong into ruin, out of venality or complaisance. Sad abasement! to imagine that this world can bestow a rank and dignity on any mortal man, so arbitrary, that his ignorance or caprice should be the rule of our belief and lives! nay, that we should carry our submission so far, as at our

death to make an exit, not the safest for our own immortal souls, but most pleasing to him!

One would expect from those who run counter to all the world, and ridicule principles universally received, that they knew more than other men, that their reasons were plain, and their arguments irrefragable.

Show me a just, chaste, temperate, and benevolent man, who affirms there is no God, I should own he was dispassionate and unprejudiced: but this worthy Atheist is not to be found.

Could I but see a man who was really persuaded that there is no God, I should hear at least on what invincible reason his disbelief is founded.

The impossibility I find myself under of proving there is no God, is a demonstration to me that there is one.

God condemns and punishes those who offend him, and is the only judge in his own cause; which were contrary to reason, were he not himself Justice and Truth; were he not God.

I feel that there is a God, and I do not feel that there is none; this suffices me, and all the reasoning in the world is to me superfluous. I conclude that he exists, and this conclusion is natural. I imbibe this principle too readily in my childhood, and have preserved it since too naturally in my riper years, ever to suspect any falsehood in it: but there are some men it seems find means to dislodge this principle; I question whether there are or no; but if there be, it proves only that there are monsters.

'There is no such thing as an Atheist; the great men, who are most suspected of being given that way are too lazy to fatigue their minds with discussions whether there is a God or no; their indolence renders them entirely easy and ignorant relating to this weighty matter, as well as to the nature of their own souls, and the consequences of true religion: they neither deny nor grant any of these things; they never think on them.

A great man • falls in a swoon, as was thought, but in a moment dies; another in a consumption wastes insensibly, and daily loses something of himself before he expires: these are dreadful but useless lessons. These circumstances, tho' so striking, and so opposite to each, affect no body, and are no more heeded than the fall of a leaf, or the fading of a flower: we are inquisitive only about their vacant employments; how such and such a place was disposed of; and envy their successors.

Is there so much goodness, fidelity, and equity, among men, as to deserve an unlimited confidence in them, and to leave no room for desiring, at least, that there was a God to whom we might appeal from their injustice, and who might protect us against their persecutions and treacheries?

If the grandeur and sublimity in religion dazzles and confounds the intellects of the Libertines, they are unworthy of their favourite

• The late P. de la Feuillade, or Monsieur de Louvois.

character; this evinces their shallowness and stupidity: if, on the other hand, the meanness and simplicity of it disgusts them, we must allow them to be geniuses indeed, and greater than so many great men who have gone before them, than the Leos, the Basils, the Jeroms, the Austins, and others who, with all their learning and endowments, gloried in the faith and profession of an humble mortified Christianity.

Some who never read the Fathers are frightened at their very names. How dull, how uncouth, how insipid, how obscure, do they fancy their discourses, their expressions and reasonings, to be! But how would these men wonder at their mistakes, when, upon looking into their writings, they find in them a more exact eloquence, a smoother style, a more ingenious and more nervous argumentation, adorned with greater energy of expression, and more natural graces, than most of the modern books which are read with the greatest applause? What a satisfaction is it to love religion, to see it explained, and its truth believed and asserted, by men of so much wit, learning, and judgment. Whether you consider compass of knowledge, depth of penetration, solid philosophy, unwearied diligence, capacity in unfolding holy mysteries, rationality of inferences, nobleness of expression, beauty of sentiments and morals, the profane author cannot come in any competition with St Austin, Plato and Cicero excepted.

Man, born a liar, cannot relish the plainness and simplicity of truth; he is altogether for dis-

guise and ornament : truth is not his own, it is made, as it were, to his hands, and descends from heaven in native beauty, whilst self-conceited man is fond of nothing but his own productions, fables, and fictions. Observe the generality of men ; they will invent a tale, or add to it, and, of course, are painters ; others are only daubers in their colourings : ask even the honestest man if his discourse is always strictly true ; if he does not sometimes catch himself, either through levity or vanity, disguising the truth ; if to imbellish a story he does not often add a false circumstance or two ? An accident has just happened in your neighbourhood, as it were, under your eye ; you may hear it related by a hundred persons a hundred different ways, yet time will be constantly varying it. How then shall I believe the relation of things that were done so many ages ago ? what reliance is due to the gravest historians ? and what is history ? Was Cesar murdered in the senate ? nay, was there ever such a one as Cesar ? You laugh at the impertinence of such questions ; my doubt seems quite absurd to you, and indeed I cannot resent it : but should I suppose that the book which gives us an account of Cesar is not a profane history, that it was not wrote by a man subject to lie, that it was not found by chance, and promiscuously among other manuscripts, some true, and others suspicious ; but that, on the contrary, it was inspired by God ; that it bears the marks of holiness and divinity ; that it has been kept for above two thousand years by innumer-

able societies of men, who all this time would not allow the least alteration to be made in it, and have held it as a part of their religion to preserve it in all its purity; and these men are, by their own principles, indispensably obliged to believe all the transactions contained in that history, where Cesar and his dictatorship is mentioned: own it, Lucilius, would you not then question whether there ever was such a man as Cesar?

All sorts of music are not fit for the divine hymns of the sanctuary; all kinds of philosophy are not fit for discoursing worthily of God, his power, the principles of his operations, or his holy mysteries: the more abstracted and notional, the more vain and useless it is in explaining these things, which require no more than right reason to be understood to a certain degree, beyond which all is out of our verge. To pretend to lay open the essence of God, of his perfections, to enter into the motives of his decrees and actions, is indeed going beyond the ancient philosophers, beyond the apostles themselves, and all the primitive teachers of the Gospel: but then it is an endless presumption: such pretenders may dig long and dig deep, but never be the nearer to the springs of truth: if once they set aside the words goodness, mercy, justice, and omnipotence, which are apt to form in our minds ideas of the Divinity so lovely and so majestic, let them afterwards strain their imaginations never so much, they will find nothing but sterility and Cimmerian darkness; they will

be lost in wild and empty notions, know not where to plant their foot, or, at least, must run themselves into subtilties, by which their religion will be weakened according to their progress in these new metaphysics.

What lengths will not men run in zeal for religion, of which yet they understand the articles as little as they practise the precepts?

That same religion which men will defend so zealously, and with so much heat and pertinacity, against those of a different persuasion, they themselves adulterate by a fondness of their own peculiar notions; add, or strike out, and not seldom, very material points, as their conveniences and humour dictate; and having thus wholly modelled the frame of it, are fervent and immoveable in these their alterations. So that, though it be commonly said of a nation, that every one has its single establishment, properly speaking it has really many religions: almost every individual man in it has one of his own.

If religion be a respectful fear of God, what shall we think of those that dare affront him in his representatives on earth, kings and sovereigns?

Were we assured that the secret intent of the ambassadors who came lately from Siam, was to persuade the most Christian King to renounce Christianity, and to admit their Talapoints into his kingdom, with free access into houses, in order, by their wise discourses, to seduce our wives, our children, and ourselves, to the prin-

ciples of their religion ; to suffer them to build pagodas amongst us, for the worshipping their golden images ; with what derision and indignation should we hear the relation of such a delirious enterprise ? yet we can sail six thousand leagues, in order to bring over to Christianity the kingdoms of India, Siam, China, or Japan, that is, with an intent which, in the eyes of all these nations, is no less ridiculous and intrusive : yet they tolerate our priests and religions, they sometimes are present at their discourses, they suffer them to build churches, and to perform all the duties of their mission : from whence proceeds such an opposite procedure in them and us ? may it not be the force of truth operating differently ?

It is not proper for all men to set up for hospitality, to have all the common beggars of the parish daily crowding at their door, and not to suffer one to go home empty : who is a stranger to the more secret wants of many worthy persons, which he is able to relieve, at least, by his intercession to others, if not immediately out of his own pocket ? In the same manner, all are not qualified for the pulpit, or fit to expound the Word of God in public ; but what man does not, some time or other, meet a Libertine, whom he might endeavour to reclaim by his private discourses and friendly admonitions ? Should a man make but one convert in his life, he could not, with any justice, be said to have lived to no purpose, or to have been an useless burden on the earth.

There are two worlds, one we already dwell in, but must leave, so as never to return; the other we must shortly be transported to, there to abide for ever. Interest, authority, friends, reputation, and riches, are most useful to the first; an indifference to all these things is most conducive for the next. Now, which had a man best chuse?

Who has lived one day has lived an age; still the same sun, the same earth, the same world, the same enjoyments, nothing more like to-day than to-morrow: death will be something new to us, being an exchange of this bodily state for a spiritual. But man; though so greedy of novelties, has no curiosity here; amidst all his fickleness and lassitude he still retains a timorous fondness for life, and, by his good will, would live for ever: what he sees of death makes a deeper impression on his mind than what he knows of it; pain, sickness, the grave, put him out of conceit with knowing another world; and the strongest motives of religion can but just bring him to receive his doom with patience.

Had GOD left it to our choice to die or to live for ever, and did we consider how dismal it is for a man to see no end of his poverty, servitude, sickness, or sorrow; or, at best, to hold riches, greatness, health, and pleasure, under the tenure of an absolute necessity of changing them, shortly, for their contraries, by the continual vicissitude of times; and thus to be whirled up and down by the wheel of

Fortune, between happiness and misery, we should be perplexed in our choice: but Nature has prevented that perplexity, and imposed on us a necessity of dying; which necessity can be made easy only by religion or insensibility.

If my religion be false, it is a snare I must, at least, own laid with such allurements, that I could not avoid running into it, and being intangled by it. What dignity, what glory, in its mysteries! what a connexion in all the several parts of its doctrine! how rational! how pure and exalted in its morals! who canst and against the strength of so many millions of witnesses, the most moderate and the wisest of men, who, during three full centuries, successively asserted it against a cruel power and a false philosophy, and whom the sense of the same truth so constantly supported in exiles, in dungeons, in torments, and even in death itself? Look into history, revolve all its parts; carry your inquiry to the beginning of the world; was there ever any thing like this? could all the power of God himself have contrived a more ensnaring deception? how can I avoid it? whither should I run? where find any thing better? any thing half so good? any thing comparable to it? if I must perish, it is this way I will perish. Denying the being of a God would fit easier on me than assenting to it, though by so plausible and so complete a delusion; but I have sifted the point thoroughly, and still want the power to be an Atheist: I am irresistibly drawn to close

with and adhere to religion : it is my resolve ; silences further debate.

Religion is either true or false ; if false, the religious man, the devout, the self-denying Christian, ventures no more than just the loss of threescore years, which we will allow to have been misapplied : but, if true, the vicious man is of all men the most miserable ; and I tremble at the very thoughts of what unutterable and incomprehensible torments I see him daily heaping upon himself. Though the truth of religion was much less demonstrable than it really is, certainly there is no prudent man but would side with virtue and religion.

They who dare deny the being of a God, hardly deserve that one should strive to demonstrate it to them ; or, at least, that one should argue with them with any more seriousness than I have done hitherto ; they are, for the generality, so ignorant, that to them the clearest principles, and most natural inferences, are obscure ; and as void are they of candour : yet I am willing to offer to their perusal what follows, provided they do not fancy that it is all that can be said upon the subject of so noble and so perspicuous a truth.

Forty years ago I was not, neither was it in my power ever to be, any more than now that I am, it is in my power to cease from being : my existence, therefore, had its beginning, and is now continued to me, through the influence of something superior and without me, and which will subsist after me, which is better and

more powerful than I am ; now if that something is not GOD, let me know what it is.

I exist : but this existence of mine proceeds, perhaps, you will say, only from the power of an universal Nature, which has been ever the same from all eternity ; but this Nature is either only spiritual, and then it is GOD ; or material, and, consequently, could not create that part of my being which is spiritual, my soul ; or else it is a compound of spirit and matter ; and then that part of nature, which you say is spirit, no other than what I call GOD.

Again : perhaps you will add, that what I call my soul is nothing but a part of matter subsisting through the power of an universal Nature, which also is material, which always was, and ever will be, such as we now behold it, and which is not GOD : but, at least, you must grant, that what I call my soul, let it be what it will, is something which thinks, and that if it is matter, it is a cogitative matter ; for you can never beat it into me, that at the time I am thus arguing there is not something within me that thinks. Now this something, if it owes its being, and its preservation, to an universal Nature which always was, and ever will be, and which it acknowledges as its original cause, it necessarily follows that this universal Nature either thinks, or is nobler and more perfect than that which thinks ; and if a nature with those modes is matter, then it must also be an universal thinking matter, or nobler and more perfect than that which does think.

I proceed, and say, that such an universal matter, if it be not a chimerical but a real essence, may be perceived by some of our senses, and that if it be not discoverable in itself, it may be known, at least, in the various arrangement of its different parts, which forms all bodies, and regulates their differences. Matter, then, is itself all these different bodies: now, since, according to the supposition, matter is a being which thinks, or is better than that which thinks, it follows that it is such in some of these bodies at least, and, consequently, that it thinks in stones, in minerals, in the earth, in the sea, in myself, who am but a body, as well as in all its other parts: I am then forbidden, for this something, which thinks within me, and which I call my soul, to all these gross passive and heterogeneous parts, as the concurrence of them make up this universal matter, or this visible world; which is absurd.

If, on the contrary, this universal Nature, it be what it will, is not all those bodies, nor any of those bodies, it follows that it is not matter, nor perceivable by any of our senses: and if, notwithstanding this, it has the cogitative faculty, or is more perfect than that which is endued with it, I still conclude that it is spirit, or something better and more perfect than spirit; now if that which thinks within me, and which I call my soul, not finding its principle in itself, and much less in matter, as has been just now demonstrated, is forced to acknowledge this universal Nature to be the first Cause, the

only origin of its subsistence, I will not dispute about words; but this first Cause, this origin of all spiritual beings, which is itself spirit, or which is better than spirit, is what I mean by God.

In a word, I think, therefore, there is a God; for that which thinks within me is not derived from myself, since it was as little in my power to give it to myself at first, as it is now to continue it for one single minute: and I received it not from a material being superior to me, since for matter to be superior to that which thinks is out of nature; from whence it follows that I must have received it from a being superior to me, and consequently immaterial; and that superior being is God.

From the inconsistency of a cogitative universal Nature with any thing that is material, must necessarily be inferred, that any particular cogitative being has no analogy with any matter; for tho' an universal being which thinks, does in its idea include infinitely more power, independence, and capacity, than that of a particular being which thinks, yet does it not imply a greater inconsistency with matter; it being impossible for this inconsistency to be greatest in either, because it is, as it were, infinite in both; and it is as impossible that the thinking principle within me should be matter, as it is inconceivable that God should be matter: as God therefore is a spirit, so my soul is also a spirit.

I cannot positively know whether a dog has

memory, love, fear, imagination, or thought, or the faculty of choice, &c. When, therefore, I am told that those actions in a dog, which seem to be the effect of either passion or sentiment, proceed necessarily and without choice from the disposition and motion of the material parts of its body, which, like clock-work, determine its several actings, I may, perhaps, acquiesce in this doctrine: but as for me, I think, and I certainly know that I think. Now view; consider any disposition or organization of material parts, which altogether make up what body you please, that is an extension with all its dimensions, which has length, breadth, and depth, which may be divided in all these respects; pray what relation, what consonance, is there betwixt such an extension and a cogitative essence?

If all things are matter, and if thinking in me, as well as in all other men, be no more than an effect of the disposition of the parts of matter, what brought into the world a mode of thinking absolutely above any thing material? Is matter able to produce so pure, so simple, so immaterial, an idea as that we have of a spirit? can matter be the origin of that which rejects it, and excludes it from its essence? can it be the cogitative principle in man, that is, can it be what convinces man that he is not material?

There are beings of a short duration, because compounded of opposite qualities, and of ingredients destructive to each other: there are others more lasting, because more simple, but they perish at last, being made up of several

parts, into which they are divisible. That which thinks within me must naturally be permanent; as it is a pure being, without any mixture and composition; of itself it is not liable to decay or dissolution; for what can corrupt or divide a simple being, and in which are no parts?

The soul sees colours through the organ of the eye, and hears sounds through the organ of the ear; but it may cease either from seeing or hearing in the want of those senses, or the absence of those objects, and yet not cease from being, because the soul is not properly that which sees or hears, it is only that which thinks: now, how can it cease from being such? it cannot through the want of organs, since it has been proved that it is not material; nor through the want of objects, whilst there is a God and eternal truths; it is therefore incorruptible.

That a soul, which God has filled with the idea of his infinite and all-perfect Being, must be annihilated, is what I cannot conceive.

Observe, Lucilius, this spot of ground, which, for delight, exceeds all the neighbouring country: here are the finest fountains, and the most curious waterworks playing amidst flowery compartments, regular walks of espaliers and lofty trees; and on this side a well-planted grove, on the other an enchanting prospect; a little lower a rivulet, which once winded obscurely among willows and poplars, and is now a famous canal, its banks lined with freestone; cast your eyes towards those spacious avenues leading to a stately seat, surrounded with water.

Will you say this is the effect of Chance ? will you suppose that all these admirable objects met together accidentally ? no ; certainly you cannot forbear admiring the order, the disposition, of them, and praising the taste and skill of the ingenious contriver. I agree with you, and take the liberty to add, this must be the residence of one of those men who, the very minute they get into place, call about them the architect, the carver, the statuary, the hydraulist, the gardener, for a sumptuous palace : yet what is this piece of ground so exquisitely laid out, and on the embellishment of which the most skilful artists have been employed, and no expense spared, if the whole earth is but an atom suspended in the air ? and if you will but hear what I am going to say.

You are placed, Lucilius, on some part of this atom, and you must needs be very little, since you take up so little room ; however, open your eyes, and raise them towards the heavens : what do you, sometimes, perceive there ? Is it the moon in its full ? a grand object ! and large as the sun itself, though all its light be but the reflection of that planet. How diminutive do the stars seem in comparison of it ? But be not deceived by outward appearance : nothing in the heavens is so little as the moon, its superficies exceeds not the thirteenth part, its solidity not the eight-and-fortieth part, and its diameter, which is two thousand two hundred and fifty miles, not a quarter part, of the diameter of the earth : and the truth is, that which

makes it apparently so large is its proximity only, its distance from us being no more than thirty times the diameter of the earth, or three hundred thousand miles. Nay, and its revolution is nothing to the prodigious course of the sun through the immense firmament; for it is certain it runs not above sixteen hundred and twenty thousand miles a-day, which is not above sixty-seven thousand five hundred miles an hour, or one thousand one hundred and five-and-twenty in a minute; and yet, to complete this course, it must run five thousand six hundred times faster than a posthorse going twelve miles an hour; it must be eighty times swifter than the celerity of sound, or than the report of a cannon, or of the thunder, which flies eight hundred and thirty-one miles an hour.

But what is the moon to the sun, with respect to dimensions, distance, or revolution? Remember only that the diameter of the earth is near nine thousand miles, that of the sun a hundred times as large, which is nine hundred thousand miles; now, if this be the breadth of it every way, judge you what its superficies, what its solidity, must be. Do you apprehend the vastness of this extent, and that a million of such globes as the earth being laid together would not exceed the magnitude of the sun? How stupendous! you cry, must then the distance of it be, if one may judge of it by the smallness of its apparent figure? True, it is inconceivable; it is demonstrated that the sun's distance from the earth can be no less than ten

thousand times the diameter of the earth; or, which is all one, than ninety millions of miles: it may be four times, perhaps six times, perhaps ten times, as much, for ought we know; no method can exactly determine this amazing distance.

Now, to assist your apprehension, let us suppose a millstone falling from the sun upon the earth; let it come down with all the rapidity imaginable, and even swifter than the descent of the most ponderous bodies; let us also suppose that it preserves always the same swiftness, without increase or diminution; that it advances forty yards every second, which is half the height of the highest steeple, and consequently two thousand four hundred yards in a minute; but, to facilitate this computation, allow it two thousand, six hundred and forty yards, which is a mile and a half, its fall will be three miles in two minutes, ninety miles in an hour, and two thousand one hundred and sixty miles in a day: now, it must fall ninety millions of miles before it comes down to the earth; so that it cannot be less than forty one thousand, six hundred and sixty-six days, which is above one hundred and forty years, in performing this journey. Nay, do not stare, Lucilius; I will tell you more. The distance of Saturn from the earth is at least ten times as much as the sun's, that is, no less than nine hundred thousand millions of miles, and this stone would be above eleven hundred and forty years in falling down from Saturn to the earth.

Now, by this altitude of Saturn, exert your imagination, if you can, to conceive the immensity of his daily course; the circle which Saturn describes is above eighteen hundred millions of miles diameter, and consequently above five thousand four hundred millions of miles in circumference; so that a race horse, if supposed to run thirty miles an hour, must be twenty thousand, five hundred and forty-eight years in taking this round.

I am yet very far, Lucilius, from having exhausted the wonders of this visible world; or, in your words, the wonders of Chance, which alone you affirm to be the primary cause of all things: there is a more skilful Creator than you imagine. Learn what chance is, suffer yourself to be informed of all the power of your god. Do you know that this distance of the sun from the earth, which is ninety millions of miles, and that of Saturn, which is nine hundred millions of miles, if compared to that of the other stars, is so inconsiderable, that comparison here is an improper term; for, indeed, what proportion is there betwixt any thing that can be measured, whatever its extent be, and that which is beyond all mensuration? The height of a star cannot be known; it is, if I may so speak, immensurable; angles, signs, and paralaxes are of no use to this problem. Should one man observe a fixed star from Paris, and another from Japan, the two lines reaching from their eyes to that star would make no angle at all, but converge into one and the same line, so far

from any thing of space is the whole earth in comparison of that distance; but the like may be said of Saturn and the sun, therefore of the stars I shall say something more. If, then, two astronomers should stand, one on the earth and the other in the sun, and from thence should observe one star at the same time, the two visual rays of these two astronomers would not form a sensible angle: but, that you may conceive the same thing another way; should a man be placed on one of the stars, this sun, this earth, and the ninety millions of miles that are betwixt them, would seem to him but as one point. This is demonstrated.

Nor is the distance known betwixt any two stars, though, to appearance, near each other. You would think, if you judged by your eye, the Pleiades almost touched one another. There is a star seems to rest itself on one of those which make the tail of the Great Bear; your sight can hardly perceive that part of the heavens which divides them; they make together, as it were, but one double star; yet if the most skilful astronomers cannot, with all their art, find out their distance, how far asunder must two stars be which appear remote from each other? and how much farther yet the two polar stars? how prodigious the length of that line which reaches from one to the other? how immense the circle of which this line is the diameter? how unfathomable the solidity of the globe, of which this circle is but a section? Shall we still wonder that these stars, though so ex-

ceeding vast, seem no larger to us than so many sparks? shall we not rather wonder that from such a height the least appearance of them should reach our eye? and, indeed, those that do not, that are invisible, exceed all number. It is true, we limit the number of the stars; but that is only of such stars as are visible to us; for how should we number those we cannot see? those, for example, which constitute the *Via Lactea*, that tract of light which, in a clear night, is to be observed in the sky from north to south; those, I say, which being, by their immeasurable height, so far out of the reach of our eyes, that we cannot distinguish any individual star amongst them, and the whole assemblage seems but faintly to illuminate that part of the heavens in which they are placed?

Behold then the earth on which we tread suspended like a grain of sand in the air: a multitude of fiery globes, the vastness whereof confounds my imagination, and the height exceeds my conceptions, all perpetually revolving round this grain of sand, and above six thousand years have been incessantly traversing the wide, the immense, spaces of the heavens. Will you have another system no less amazing? The earth itself is carried round the sun, which is the centre of the universe, with an inconceivable velocity. Methinks I see the motion of all these globes, the orderly march of these prodigious bodies; no disorder, no deflection, no collision, ever happens, they never so much as graze each other; should but the least of them happen to

start aside and meet the earth, the earth, which we call the world, what must become of it? But, on the contrary, all keep their respective stations, and revolve in the order prescribed to them, and this, at least, with respect to us, is performed so silently, that the vulgar know not that there are such bodies. Oh, the amazing economy of Chance! Could Intelligence itself have surpassed this? One thing only is a stumblingblock to me, Lucilius: these vast bodies are all so constant and exact in their various courses and revolutions, that a little animal, confined to a corner of that immense space which it called the World, from his accurate observations on them, has contrived a punctual infallible method of foretelling in what degree of their respective courses every one of these stars will be two thousand, four thousand, nay, twenty thousand, years hence. Here lyes my scruple, Lucilius: if it be by chance that they are so invariable in their motions, what is order, what is regularity?

Nay, I will ask you what is Chance? Is it a body? is it a spirit? is it a being distinguished from all other beings, which has a peculiar existence, or which resides in any place? or, rather, is it not a mode or a kind of being? When a bowl runs against a stone, we are apt to say it is a chance; but is it any more than an accidental hitting of these bodies one against the other? If, by this chance, or this knock, the bowl changes its straight into an oblique course; if its motion from progressive becomes retro-

grade ; if, ceasing from rolling on its axis, it whirls about like a top, shall I from thence infer that motion in general proceeds in this bowl from this same chance ? Shall I not rather apprehend that the bowl owes it to itself, or to the impulse of the arm that delivered it ? Or, because the circular motions of the wheels of a clock are determined the one by the other in their degrees of swiftness, shall I be less curious in examining what may be the cause of these several motions ? whether it lyes in the wheels themselves, or is impressed on them by the force and oscillations of a weight ? But neither these wheels nor this bowl could produce this motion in themselves, nor is it a natural property if they can be deprived of it without any change of their nature ; it is therefore likely that they are moved some other way, and by an external power. And, as for the celestial bodies, if they should be deprived of their motion, would therefore their nature be altered ! would they cease from being bodies ? I cannot believe they would : yet they move, and since they move not themselves, nor by their own nature, must there not, Lucilius, be some principle without them that causes this motion ? Whatever you find it, I call it God.

Should we suppose these great bodies to be indeed without motion, I should not then ask who moves them ; but the question, who made them ? would still be pertinent ; as I may ask, Who made these wheels, or this bowl ? and though each of these bodies were supposed to

be but a mass of atoms, fortuitously conglomerated through the figure and conformity of their parts, I should take one of those atoms, and say, Who created this atom? is it matter? is it spirit? had it any idea of itself? If so, then it existed a minute before it did exist; it was and it was not at the same time; and, if it be the author of its own essence, and of the mode thereof, why did it make itself a body rather than a spirit? Farther still, had this atom no beginning? is it eternal? is it infinite? will you make a GOD of this atom?

The mite has eyes; it turns aside if it meets with any hurtful objects; it has a sense of danger; place it on a flat piece of ebony, for the clearer observation, and if, while it is walking, you lay but the least bit of straw in its way, you will see it alter its course immediately: and can you think that the crystalline humour, the retina, and the optic nerve, of this minute animal are the products of Chance?

Let pepper ly in water a little time, then view a single drop of it with a microscope, it exhibits an infinite number of animalcula, frisking about with incredible agility, like so many monsters in the ocean; each of these animalcula is a thousand times less than a mite, and yet is a body that lives, that receives nourishment, that grows, that must not only have muscles, but such vessels also as are equivalent to veins, nerves, and arteries, and a brain for the distribution of its animal spirits.

A mould speck, tho' no bigger than a grain

of sand, appears through a microscope a distinct assemblage of many plants, of which some are plainly seen to bear flowers, and others fruits; some with opening buds, and others are withered. How extremely small must be the roots and fibres through which these little plants receive their nourishment? And if one considers that these plants bear their own seed as well as oaks or pines; or that those animalcula I was speaking of are multiplied by generation; as well as elephants and whales, whither will not such observations lead? whose work are all these minute curiosities, so exceeding minute that no eye can perceive them, and, like the heavens, they border upon infinitude, though in the other extreme? Sure it can be no other than the same Being who made, and who moves, with so much facility, the heavens and the stars, those vast bodies which are so wonderful in their dimensions, their altitude, celerity, and revolutions.

The sun, the stars, the heavens, communicate their influences to man; he enjoys them no less than he does the air he breathes, and the earth on which he treads: and if the certainty of a fact need to be illustrated by fitness and verisimilitude, these are deducible from the human dignity, the heavens and all the vast expanse are not to be compared for grandeur and excellence with the meanest of men; there being the like proportion betwixt them, which is betwixt matter, an inactive mass, destitute of sensation, and spirit, reason, or intelligence. If

any one says, that less would have served for the preservation of man ; I answer, that all are not too much to display the power, the goodness, and the magnificence, of the supreme Creator, since immense and stupendous as his works are, he could produce infinitely more.

The whole world, if it be made for man, is, and that in a literal sense, the least thing that God has done for man ; the proof of which may be drawn from religion. Man is, therefore, neither presumptuous nor vain, when authorised by all the evidence of truth, he owns the advantages he has received, and might be charged with blindness and ingratitude, did he refuse to yield to the multitude of proofs which religion lays before him, to show him his situation, his privileges, his hopes, his resources, and to teach him what he is, and what he may be. Ay, but the moon is inhabited, at least, we do not know but it may. To how little purpose is it you talk of the moon, Lucilius ? if you own there is a God, nothing, indeed, is impossible. But do you mean to ask whether it is on us alone that God has bestowed such great blessings ? whether there are not other men, or other creatures, in the moon, whom also he has made the objects of his bounty ? Vain curiosity ! frivolous question ! Lucilius, the earth is inhabited, we are the inhabitants of it, and we know that we are so, we have proofs, demonstrations, and convictions, sensations for all that we are to believe of God and ourselves. Let the nations who inhabit

the celestial globes, whatever those nations are, attend to their concerns; they have their cares, and we our's. You have observed the moon, Lucilius; you have perceived its spots, its depths, its inequalities, its altitude, its extent, its course, and its eclipses, no astronomer has yet done more: now, contrive some new optical instruments; observe it again, and see whether it is inhabited, and by what species of inhabitants; whether they are like men; or whether they are really men: let me look after you, that we may be convinced that there are men who inhabit the moon, and then, Lucilius, we will consider whether those men are Christians or no, and whether they stand upon a level with us in the Divine favour.

Many millions of years, nay, many thousand millions of years; in a word, all time is but an instant, compared with the duration of God, who is eternal: the extent of the whole universe is but a point, an atom, compared with his immensity: if it be so, as I affirm it is, for what proportion can there be between finite and infinite? I ask what is the course of a man's life, or what the extent of that grain of sand which is called the Earth; nay, of a small part of that earth which man inhabits and enjoys? The wicked are prosperous while they live; yes, some of them, I own; virtue is oppressed, and vice remains unpunished; it happens so sometimes, it is true: this is then an injustice; not at all. You should have proved, to warrant this inference, that the wicked are absolutely happy, the

virtuous absolutely miserable, and that impunity is annexed to guilt; that the time in which the good are oppressed, and the wicked prosperous, is of some duration; that what we call Prosperity and good Fortune, is something more than a false appearance, a fleeting shadow; and that this atom the earth, in which virtue and vice have such improper allotments, is the only state of rewards and punishments.

My thinking does not more strongly convince me that I am spirit, than I conclude from what I do, or do not, according as I please, that I am free. Now freedom imports choice, or voluntary determination towards good or evil, or doing a good or evil action in which consists virtue or vice: for vice to be for ever absolutely unpunished would indeed be injustice. For vice to be unpunished on earth is a mystery only; yet, let us, with the Atheist, suppose that also an injustice. All injustice is a negation or a privation of justice, therefore all injustice supposes a justice: all justice is a conformity to a sovereign reason. I will ask you, then, when was it not reasonable that vice should be punished? at no other time, I suppose, than when a triangle had not three angles. Now, all conformity to reason is a truth: this conformity, as I said just now, always subsisted, is of the number of those we call eternal truths: but this truth either is not and cannot be, or else it is the object of an intelligence. This intelligence therefore is eternal, and this eternal intelligence is GOD.

The most secret crimes, and, to the concealment of which, the most artful precautions, have been used, are sometimes brought to light by such singular incidents, or such wrong measures in the perpetrators, as plainly point out the finger of God in the detection. These discoveries are so frequent, that they who are pleased to attribute them to Chance, must own at least, that in all ages Chance seems to have been very regular in its operations.

If you suppose that every man on earth, without exception, should be rich, and want nothing, I will infer from thence, that every man on earth would be extremely poor, and in want of every thing. There are but two sorts of riches, and to them all the rest are reducible, money and land; if all were rich, who would sweat at the plow and spade? or toil in the dark mines to supply the world with their metals? they who live remote from the repositories of gold and silver could not dig for gold and silver, and they who inhabit barren lands, which most abound in mines, would be in want of grain. Ay, but trade is an expedient which would supply both one and the other: but were opulence universal, were none under a necessity of living by labour, who would engage in the troubles and dangers of commerce? who would transport your gold and silver, or any other commodities? who would be shipwrights? what necessitous wretches could be found for sailors? who would travel in caravans? every convenience, every necessary, would then be wanted.

To exclude necessity from the earth were to exclude arts and sciences, all inventions and handicrafts; besides, such an equality amongst men, in riches and possessions, would, consequentially, occasion the like, in their ranks and stations, would banish all subordination, and would reduce men to be their own servants, to receive no help nor succour from each other, would make laws frivolous and useless, would bring on universal anarchy, would produce violence, injuries, murders, and impunity.

If, on the other hand, you suppose all men to be poor and indigent, in vain the sun enlightens our horizon; in vain it warms and fructifies the earth; in vain the heavens shed their benign influences on it; in vain the rivers water it with their streams, and diffuse verdure and fertility; in vain the sea, the rocks, and the mountains, are ransacked and rifled of their treasures. But if you grant that, of all men who are scattered throughout the world; some should be rich, and others poor, necessity then must reconcile, unite, and cement them together; some must serve and obey, some must cultivate the earth; some work the mine, some plough the ocean, some must contrive, some improve, some perfect; others must rule, protect, assist, and communicate. Order is restored, and Providence appears.

Should you suppose power, ease, and pleasure, to be the share of some men only, and subjection, care, and misery, the lot of all the rest, ei-

ther the malignity of men have thrown things into this disorder, or GOD is not GOD.

Some inequality in the conditions of men is conducive to order and the welfare of the whole, is the work of GOD, and demonstrates a divine law : too great a disproportion, and such as is generally seen amongst them, is their own work, and the law of force and violence.

Extremes are vicious, and proceed from men : compensation is just, and proceeds from GOD.

If these *Characters* do not take, I shall wonder ; and if they do, I shall wonder no less.

THE
C H A R A C T E R S
OF
T H E O P H R A S T U S .

TRANSLATED
FROM THE GREEK.

WITH A
PREFATORY DISCOURSE
CONCERNING THEOPHRASTUS.

BY M. DE LA BRUYERE.

THE
CHALCOTHS

OF
THE FORMER STATES

TRANSLATED
FROM THE GREEK

BY
TREATY DISCOVERIES

CONTAINING THE HISTORY

OF THE CHALCOTHS

PREFATORY DISCOURSE.

A MORE vain and ridiculous thought can never enter into man's head, than to imagine writings shall go free of all sort of censure, and obtain the suffrage of every reader.

For, without enlarging on the diversity of human minds, not less than that of faces, some relishing speculations, and others only what is reducible to practice; some reading to amuse their fancy, others to improve their judgment; some love the force of demonstration, others to find out truth by dint of their own indagations: for my part, that science which describes manners, examines men, and discovers their characters, is my favourite sphere; yet I apprehend that works of this kind, which touch so close, and whose subject is men themselves, will not occasion such a demand as to put the press in a hurry.

Some of the learned relish nothing but the apophthegms of the Ancients, and examples drawn from the Romans, Grecians, Persians, and Egyptians; the history of the present time is insipid to them; they have no manner of concern for men with whom they converse, and disdain to make observations on modern manners.

The ladies and courtiers, on the contrary, and

all who have most wit and least learning, indifferent to former ages, are curious after what passes before their eyes, are fond of knowing the particulars of a play in which they themselves act a part : they observe the persons with whom they live ; no reading is to them so delightful and interesting as descriptions and anecdotes of their contemporaries and fellow-citizens ; in short, of those who resemble themselves, but with whom they think they have not any resemblance : infomuch that the pulpit orators are often seen to omit sublime divinity, that, by accommodating their instructions to the general goût, they may allure them to truth and piety.

The Court is either ignorant of the City, or has so contemptuous an opinion of it, as not to take the ridicule, or to be the least touched with imagery drawn from thence ; and if, on the contrary, the Court is represented, as it always is, full of falsehood and intrigues, the curiosity of the City is not piqued by such a delineation. No just idea of that insidious country can be but by living there. On the other side, it is not very natural for men to applaud the delicacy of a moral treatise which exhibits themselves so naturally as to command an uneasy consciousness of the resemblance ; their self-love, indeed, will encourage the satirist, if they are not among the number of his pictures.

What probability is there of pleasing all the different tastes of men by one single tract of morality ? Some look for definitions, divisions,

and method; are desirous to have explained what virtue is in general, and then every virtue in particular; the difference betwixt valour, fortitude, and magnanimity; the defects or excesses betwixt which each virtue is placed, and to which of the two extremes each most inclines: no other doctrine pleases them. Others, satisfied with having the manners referred to the passions, and these demonstrated to be constitutional, will excuse an author all the rest.

The third class being of opinion, that the whole doctrine of manners ought to tend to reformation, to distinguish the good from the bad, and to recommend what is virtuous, proper, and amiable, by exposing what is vicious, vain, or sordid, apply the principles of natural and moral philosophy repeated by the Ancients and Moderns to the manners of the times; correct men, by contrasting one with another, promote a rectitude of mind and heart by representations of things familiar to them, but from which care or pleasure divert their reflection.

Such is Theophrastus's treatise of *Moral Characters*: he collected them from the ethics and moral lectures of Aristotle, whose scholar he was. The definitions, at the beginning of each chapter, are built on the ideas of that great philosopher; and the foundation of the Characters there described is taken from the same original, but enlarged by very humorous and natural improvements of his own.

This Book must be owned to be no more than the sketch of a greater, which Theophrastus

had begun. The design of this philosopher, as appears from his own Preface, was to treat of all the virtues and vices; and, as he undertook this great work at ninety-nine years of age, it is probable that the shortness of his remaining life prevented its completion. The common opinion is, that he lived above an hundred years; and St Jerome, in one of his letters, written to Nepotianus, asserts that he died full an hundred and seven years old; so that I doubt not in the least but it was an ancient error either in the Greek numerical letters, by which Diogenes Laertius computed, who reckoned him to have lived but ninety-five years, or in the first transcripts of this historian, if what others say is true, that the ninety-nine years, which the author ascribes to himself in the Preface, are read alike in four manuscripts in the Palatine library; where are also the five last chapters of Theophrastus, wanting in the old editions; and where are also two titles, the one, *The Opinion the World has of the Vicious*; the other, *Of Sordid Gain*; which are found alone without chapters.

Thus is this Work no more than a fragment; but nevertheless a precious remain of Antiquity, and a monument of the uncommon vivacity and sagacious judgment of this philosopher at so great an age. It has always been looked on as a masterpiece in its kind, there being nothing extant wherein the Attic taste and the Grecian eloquence are so happily blended: it was called a Golden Book. The learned particu-

larly observing the diversity of manners depicted, and the natural expression of the Characters, and comparing it with that of the poet Menander, a disciple of Theophrastus, and afterwards the model of Terence, cannot but discover in this little tract the original of all comedy; that comedy, I mean, which, rejecting all quibbles, obscenities, and puns, adheres to nature and elegance, and which the virtuous will honour with their presence.

But to illustrate the beauty of these Characters their author must not be forgotten: he was a fuller's son of Eresus, a city in Lesbos: his first master in his own country was Leucippus* of the same place; from whence he went to Plato's school, and afterwards settled at Aristotle's, where he soon distinguished himself from all the rest of his disciples. His new master, charmed with his wit and elocution, changed his name, which was Tyrtamus, to that of Euphrastus, which signifies a fine speaker; but this name not coming up to the eulogium due to his genius and language, he called him *Theophrastus*, i. e. a divine speaker: which agrees with Cicero's sentiments of this philosopher, in his book entitled *Brutus*, or, *De Claris Oratoribus*. Who is, says he, more copious than Plato, more solid than Aristotle, more agreeable than Theophrastus? And in some of his Epistles to Atticus he calls him his friend, and says, that his Works are familiar to him, and

* Not Leucippus the famous philosopher, Zeno's scholar,

the reading of them had afforded him an exquisite pleasure.

Aristotle relates concerning him and Calisthenes, another of his scholars, what Plato before said of Aristotle himself, and Xenocrates, that Calisthenes had a dull invention, and a sluggish fancy; and that Theophrastus, on the contrary, was so sprightly, attentive, and penetrating, that he would comprehend all that was to be known of a thing; that one wanted to be spurred, and the other to be checked.

His characteristic quality was the sweetness which ran through his style and conversation. It is said that Aristotle's scholars, observing their master to be upon the decline, petitioned him to name his successor; and he had only two persons in his school betwixt whom his choice could be divided, Menedemus * the Rhodian, and Theophrastus the Lesbian. Out of a tenderness for him whom he designed to exclude, he declared himself after this gentle and ingenious manner. Pretending, a little time after his disciples had made this request to him, and in their presence, that the common wine did not agree with him, he ordered some Rhodian and Lesbian wine to be brought him; after tasting both, he said they were genuine, and each in its kind excellent; the first was strong, but that of Lesbos more pleasant to his palate. Whatever Aulus Gellius says in reference to this matter, it is certain that when Aristotle

* There were two others of that name, one a Cynic philosopher, the other a scholar of Plato.

was accused by Eurimedon, a priest of Ceres, for having spoken irreverently of the gods, fearing the fate of Socrates, he quitted Athens, and gave up his school to a Lesbian, whom he intrusted with his writings, on condition he should never make them public: this Lesbian was no other than Theophrastus, to whom we are obliged for the Works of that great man.

His name became so famous through all Greece, as successor to Aristotle, that soon after the school was frequented by near two thousand scholars. He was envied by * Sophocles, son to Amphiclides, at that time chief magistrate, who, under pretext of suppressing disorderly meetings, made a law prohibiting, under pain of death, any philosopher to teach in schools. They all submitted to it; but the following year Philo succeeding Sophocles, the Athenians repealed this detestable law, laid a fine of five talents upon the promoter of it, and re-established the philosophical lectures.

In this he was more fortunate than Aristotle, who was forced to submit to Eurimedon. He was near seeing one Agonides punished by the Athenians for impiety, only because he durst accuse him of it; so great was the opinion this people had of him, and which his virtue deserved.

And, indeed, the character given of him is, that he was a man of singular prudence, a zealous patriot, laborious, officious, affable, libe-

* Not the Tragic Poet.

ral. Plutarch says, when Eresus was oppressed with tyrants, he joined with Phydias * his countryman, and out of his own estate contributed with him to arm the exiles, who forcing into the city, expelled the usurpers, and restored the whole isle of Lesbos to its liberty.

His many and excellent accomplishments did not only acquire him the good will of the people, but the esteem and familiarity of kings. Cassander, successor of Arideus, brother to Alexander the Great, was his friend: and Ptolemy, son of Lagos, and first King of Egypt, kept a constant correspondence with this philosopher. A vigorous constitution, assisted by temperance and exercise, carried him to a very advanced age, which had not relaxed his application to studies promotive of the general good: all Greece lamented him, and all the Athenians assisted at his funeral.

In his extreme old age, when walking became painful, he frequently caused himself to be carried in a litter through the city, to gratify the people's desire to see him. It is reported also, that his scholars, who stood about his bed when he was dying, asking him if he had nothing to recommend to them, he addressed himself to them after this manner:

“ Life deceives us, it promises us great pleasure in the possession of honour; but life and misery begin together, and together end in death. Of all vanities nothing is more unpro-

* Not the famous Statuary.

“fitable than the thirst of fame; therefore,
“my disciples, be content: if you can contemn
“the esteem of men, you will save a great deal
“of trouble: yet a perseverance in wisdom and
“magnanimity cannot naturally fail of acquiring honour. Bear in mind, that in life are
“many useless things, and but few really desirable. My precious time will not allow me
“to discourse on sects; but you, my survivors,
“you cannot too seriously consider which you
“ought to embrace.” And these were his last words.

Cicero, in his third book of his Tusculan questions, says, that Theophrastus at his death complained of Nature, for giving deer and crows so long a life, which was useless to them, while she had stinted men to a very short duration, though for them to live long was of such consequence: that if the age of men were prolonged, their life would be improved, and with it arts and sciences be brought more speedily to perfection. St Jerom further assures us, that Theophrastus at one hundred and seven years, under his last distemper, lamented he was obliged to quit life at a time when he just began to be wise.

He used to say, We ought not to love our friends in order to try them, but to try them in order to love them: that friends ought to be common amongst brethren, as all things are common amongst friends: that a horse without a bridle is as much to be trusted as a man without judgment: that the most pernicious waste

is that of time. To a person who sat silent at table during an entertainment he said, If you are a man of sense, you are to blame to say nothing; if otherwise, you are in the right. These were some of his maxims.

But if we speak of his Works, they are infinite; none of the Ancients having writ more than Theophrastus. Diogenes Laertius reckons up above two hundred different tracts, but of the greatest part time has deprived us, and the remains are reduced to twenty tracts, which are collected together in the volume of his Works. There are nine books of the history of plants, six of their causes: he wrote of winds, of fire, of stones, of honey, of the signs of fair weather, of the signs of tempests, of the signs of rain, of smells, of sweat, of the vertigo, of weariness, of the relaxation of the nerves, of swooning, of fish which live out of the water, of animals which change their colour, of animals which are born suddenly, of animals subject to envy, and of Characters: amongst all which this last, which I have translated, is not inferior to any.

But if this moral treatise should be coldly looked upon by some, as only applicable to the times in which it was wrote, and altogether foreign to the present manners, would it not be a point of wisdom in them to divest themselves of this hasty prepossession in favour of their own customs, of which the consequence is a conceited and insolent censure of all foreigners? thus depriving themselves of that rational

pleasure which the candid mind enjoys in turning over the Ancients.

The present Moderns will be ancient a few ages hence; when the history of our times will reconcile posterity to the selling of offices, that is to say, the power of protecting innocence, punishing guilt, and doing justice to the world, bought with ready money like a farm; will reconcile them to the splendour of our Revenue-farmers*, a sort of men held in the utmost contempt and abhorrence amongst the Hebrews and Greeks. They will hear of a great city without any public places, baths, fountains, amphitheatres, galleries, porticoes, or public walks, and this the capital of a powerful kingdom; they will be told of persons whose life was spent in going from one house to another; of honest women who kept neither shops nor inns, yet had their houses open for those who would pay for their admission, where you might be furnished with all the implements of gaming and feasting, and where the amorous commerce was not interdicted: they will be informed that people crowded the streets only to be thought in a hurry; that there was no conversation or cordiality there, but all in confusion, and, as it were, in alarm by the rattle of coaches driving as for a prize: they will learn without wonder, that in time of profound tranquillity the inhabitants went to the temples, visited their acquaintance, with

* Collectors of the Revenues.

offensive weapons; and that every fashionable person carried at his side wherewith at one push to murder another.

Now, if our posterity, astonished at these decent customs, so different from their's, should presume to dislike our memoirs, our comedies and satires, might not we complain of them beforehand? might we not object to them thus prejudiced, that they deprived themselves of the reading so many excellent works, sublime poems, and elaborate treatises, and of the knowledge of the most glorious reign which ever yet adorned history?

The same equitable regard which we ourselves require from posterity should be shown to the Ancients; being persuaded no usages or customs are perennial, but varying with the times; and that we are too remote from the past, and too near the present, to survey them in the just point of view. Then let not what we are pleased to call the politeness of our manners, or the decorum of our customs, or our taste and magnificence, prepossess us any more against the Athenian simplicity than against that of the first men, great of themselves, and independent on a thousand accessaries, the devices of succeeding times, to supply the deficiency of that true grandeur from which they imperceptibly had degenerated.

In them was seen the original purity and dignity of Nature, as yet unfulled by vanity, luxury, and ambition. Honour then consisted in bravery and virtue; none were enriched by

places or pensions, but by their fields and flocks, their children and servants; their food was wholesome and natural, the fruits of the earth, and the milk of their beasts; their raiment plain and convenient, made of their fleeces; their joys, plentiful harvests, the marriage of their children, good understanding with their neighbours, and domestic affection. Nothing can be more opposite to our manners than all these things; but the distance of time makes us relish them, as the distance of place occasions us to receive the relations of foreign countries. Travellers tell us of a religion, a polity, habits, buildings, and manner of living, of which we were totally ignorant; those which come nearest our's please us, those which are more distant fill us with admiration; we are all amused, but few enter into the conveniency and decorum, or the impropriety and disadvantage, of them: they whom these accounts concern are Siamites, Chinese, Negroes, or Abyssines, that is enough for us.

Now they whose manners Theophrastus paints were Athenians, and we are Frenchmen; and if we add to the diversity of place and climate the long interval of time, and consider that this Book was wrote in the last year of the 115th Olympiad, three hundred and fourteen years before the Christian era, and also that it is above two thousand years since the people of Athens lived, whom he represents, we shall be surpris'd to see and know ourselves there, our friends, our enemies, our acquaintance; and

that at the distance of so many ages the resemblance should be so perfect. Indeed, men in their affections and passions change not, but are still the same they were, and, as they are described by Theophrastus, vain, dissemblers, flatterers, selfish, impudent, importunate, distrustful, slanderous, quarrelsome, and superstitious.

Athens, indeed, was a free city, the centre of the Republic; its citizens were equal, were not ashamed of one another; they went mostly alone and on foot, through a neat, peaceful, and spacious city, going into the shops and markets to buy themselves what necessaries they wanted; court emulation did not seduce them to leave this common way of life; they kept slaves for the baths, for their repasts, for their domestic service, and for travelling; their time was discreetly divided between the public places, the temples, the amphitheatres, the pier, or the porticoes, and the hall of a city, of which they were equally masters. There the people met together on public deliberations, there gave audience to strangers. In other places the philosophers sometimes delivered their lectures, sometimes conversed with their scholars. These places were at once a scene of pleasure and business; there was something plain and popular in their manners, which, I acknowledge, little resemble our's; yet, notwithstanding, what men were the Athenians in general! and what a city was Athens! what laws! what government! what valour! what discipline! what perfection

in all arts and sciences! nay, what politeness in their common conversation and language! Theophrastus, the same Theophrastus, of whom so great things have been said, this charming speaker, this man of a divine elocution, was known to be a foreigner, and called so by an herbwoman in the market, who, by a sort of Attic delicacy, which he wanted, and which the Romans afterwards called Urbanity, perceived that he was no Athenian; and Cicero relates, that this great man was amazed that, having lived to an old age in Athens, perfect master of the Attic philosophy, habituated to the accent so many years, he could not attain to that which early custom taught the common people to do without any difficulty. But if this Treatise exhibits Characters utterly ridiculous and unjustifiable, we ought to remember that Theophrastus had the same thought of them; that he looked upon them as vices, and drew them so to the life, that the pictures might serve to reclaim the Athenians from all manner of immorality.

But to please those with whom foreigners and the Ancients are of no account, and who value no manners but those in vogue, we have added them likewise to this Work. It was thought excusable not to keep exactly in the track of this philosopher, as well because imitation of the works of another, especially if he be an Ancient, or an author of great reputation, rarely succeeds; as also, because the single figure called Description or Enumeration, so hap-

pily made use of in these twenty-eight chapters of Characters, in the hands of a genius much inferior to that of Theophrastus, would produce only a spiritless uniformity.

Upon a recurrence also, that in Diogenes Laertius's catalogue of this philosopher's tracts, one bears the title of *Proverbs*, that is to say, detached sentences, such as reflections or remarks; and that the first and greatest book of morality ever composed bears the same name in the Sacred Writ; I found myself excited, by these illustrious models, to exert myself in the like method*; and was not discouraged, though apprehensive that some, either through inattention, or an implacable spirit of criticising, may think these remarks only a disguised copy of two celebrated systems of morality.

The first makes metaphysics subservient to religion, explains the nature of the soul, its passions, its vices; discusses the most prevalent motives to virtue, and endeavours to make a man a Christian: the other, which is the production of a thorough acquaintance with the world, and in which the delicacy is equal to the penetration, observing that self-love in man is the source of all his errors, the author attacks it in all its disguises and effects; and this one thought being most happily diversified by a most ornamental choice of words and variety

* The short concise manner in which Solomon wrote his *Proverbs* is here meant, and by no means the matter, which, being divine, admits of no comparison.

of expressions, has, throughout, the charms of novelty.

I have not followed either of these two ways in the Work which is joined to the translation of these Characters; it is less sublime than the first, and less delicate than the second; its sole design is to reform mankind by plain maxims, by real imagery, and known representations.

I have mostly applied myself to the vices of the mind, the sinuities of the heart, and inward depravity, which Theophrastus has not done; and I may say that as his Characters, by a thousand external particulars, by the actions, words, gestures, and deportment of a man, expose his principles, and lead us to the latent source of his irregularities; on the quite contrary, these new Characters, laying open the thoughts, sentiments, and inclinations of men, indicate the principle of their outward villany and folly, that we perceive what excesses they are capable of, and whatever concern their various aberrations may give us, we little wonder at them.

It must be acknowledged that, in the titles of the several chapters of both Works, the difficulty was found near equal; as to those into which the latter is divided, if they do not please, the reader is welcome to substitute others. But, with relation to the titles of *the Characters of Theophrastus*, the same liberty is not allowable, as we are not masters of another man's property, but must follow the spirit of the author, and render him, according to the nearest sense of

the Greek words, and at the same time according to the most exact conformity to their chapters, which is not without its difficulties; because very often the literal translation of a Greek phrase gives it quite another import in our language: thus irony, which with us is raillery in conversation, or a trope in rhetoric, with Theophrastus signifies something between cheating and dissembling, not absolutely the one nor the other, but that very particular described in his first chapter.

Further, the Greeks have sometimes two or three very different terms to express several things, which we cannot render but only by one single word; this poverty of our language is a very perplexing embarrassment.

You may observe in the Greek Work three sorts of avarices, two sorts of busybodies, flatterers of two sorts, and as many of great talkers; by which means the Characters seem to interfere one with the other, and deviate from the titles; neither are they always pursued exactly, nor perfectly conformable; because Theophrastus, eagerly bent on real portraits, found himself obliged to these alterations by the character and manners of the person satirized.

The definitions which introduce each chapter were not the easiest part; being short and concise in Theophrastus, according to the force of the Greek, and the style of Aristotle, from whom he had the first ideas, there was no rendering them intelligible but by a paraphrastical translation: this Tract also has some mutilated

sentences, where, of course, the sense is imperfect; but the whole is easily supplied.

To conclude: this Work being only an artless display of many prevailing defects, calculated rather to make men wise than learned, curious observations or learned commentaries would be out of character: in the few notes which I have added I intended the satisfaction of many ingenious persons, who may be little read in the customs of Antiquity.

THE
C H A R A C T E R S
O F
T H E O P H R A S T U S.

INTRODUCTION.

BEFORE I entered on the following Work, I have often wondered, and am still at a loss to account for it, how it comes to pass that, tho' all Greece lyes under the same climate, and tho' all its inhabitants are educated in the same method, there should, notwithstanding, be so great a diversity in our manners. Since then, my dear Polycles, I have long studied human nature, having lived ninety-nine years, and been conversant with men of all humours, tempers, and inclinations; since I have thoroughly considered both the virtuous and the vicious part of mankind, and accurately compared them one with another, I thought my time could not be better employed than to represent them under their respective *Characters* and ways of

living; and not only to draw the Greeks in general, but even to depict those particulars by which one man is distinguished from another. I am in hopes, my dear Polycles, that a Work of this nature will not be useless to posterity, as it will set before them proper objects of emulation, and persons worthy of their acquaintance and intimacy. The truth and justness of the following *Characters* I submit to your judgment, and, without further preface, shall begin with that of *Disimulation*. Antecedently I define this vice, then describe a Dissembler, expose his views, and shall afterwards treat of the other dispositions of the mind in the same method.

I. DISSIMULATION.

DISSIMULATION is "the art of speaking
"and acting in disguise, to compass some
"finister selfish design." The Dissembler ad-
dresses himself to his enemy as if, so far from
having any grudge against him, he took a par-
ticular pleasure in his conversation. He prai-
ses and caresses those whom he undermines,
and overflows with outward condolances for
their misfortunes, whilst he rejoices at them in
his heart. If you speak ill of him, he meekly
pretends to forgive you: if you utter the most
bitter invectives against him, he only thanks
you for telling him his faults. After doing a
man an injury, he redoubles his professions of
friendship, and sweetens him out of his resent-
ments. If you go to him upon any affair which
he knows to be urgent and momentous, he be-
seeches you to call upon him another time.
He affects mystery in all his behaviour, and by
his talk he seems to have spent his whole life
in deliberating, without ever coming to a reso-
lution. He has an under meaning in the most
indifferent things. He does not so much as
tell you he is just returned from the country,
that it was dark before he came to town, or
that his head ached upon the road, without
having a design upon you. When you would

borrow of him, he never was so bare of money in his life; but when he is really out of cash, he triumphs in the fulness of his coffers. After listening very attentively to every circumstance of an affair, he begs your pardon for not having minded what you were talking of. He fixes his eye upon a person for an hour together, and immediately after affirms he never saw him. His memory is so very treacherous, that he forgets every thing he has articulated with you that is not to his advantage. He has one short answer which serves for all occasions, *He will consider of it.* He cannot possibly see into an affair which a little before he himself explained to you. His censures are very artful, and covered under a seeming surprise. "It is impossible," says he; "Bless me! I am astonished!" He is so startled at what you tell him, that "sure he is not himself." After a short pause his wonder increases. "Why," says he, "he told me quite another story. This is all a maze. You can never be in earnest. I cannot disbelieve you, neither can I think so ill of him." Take great care that you are not misled by these hints, these ambiguous expressions and fly exaggerations. The poison of a viper is not more insinuating or more pernicious.

II. FLATTERY.

FLATTERY is "a manner of conversation ignominious in itself, but advantageous to

“ the Flatterer.” If a Flatterer is in a public walk with you, “ Do you mind,” whispers he, “ how every one’s eye is upon you : Athens does not afford a man so generally esteemed : “ it was no more than justice done you yesterday in the portico : there were above thirty “ of us together, and the question being started, “ Who was the worthiest person in the commonwealth ? the whole company was of the “ same opinion. In short, Sir, they declared “ you was the man.” He follows his whisper with a thousand other Flatteries equally false and seductive. If a bit of lint sticks to your garment, he takes it off with an humble officiousness. If the wind has blown a feather or straw into your hair, after picking it out very carefully, he shows it you with a most insipid smile, “ How old are you grown,” says he, “ since I saw you last, that is about a week ! “ it is time enough (methinks) for a man of “ your age to have grey hairs in his head.” Whenever the person to whom he would make his court begins to speak, the sycophant begs the company to be silent, most impudently praises him to his face, is in raptures all the while he talks, and as soon as he has done, cries out, “ That is fine, that is to the purpose !” When his patron aims at being witty upon any man, he is ready to burst at the smartness of his raillery, and stops his mouth with the end of his gown that he may not laugh out. If he walks with him in the street, he clears the way, and makes every one stand till his dupe is gone

by. When he comes home, and calls his children about him, the Flatterer has a pocket full of apples for them, which he distributes among them with an endearing fondness; adding a kiss, and calling them the delicate branches of a noble stock. His patron cannot so much as try on a shoe but the shape of his foot must be complimented. If he makes a visit, our parasite runs before him to give notice to the master of the house what an honour is intended him, and returns in the same hurry, to let him know that every thing is ready for his reception. He is a rare fellow at all female business, and is as handy at their trifles as any fribble in the city. At an entertainment he is the first man to lanch out in praise of the wine, victuals, and arrangement; is sure to get near the master of the feast, and tells him with much concern, that "he eats nothing himself." He singles out some particular dish, then calls to the company, was there ever the like of this! He desires the generous founder to sit in a warmer part of the room, advises him to be more tender of himself, and clothe warmly in such nipping weather. He is perpetually whispering to him, and cannot give any attention, or so much as a look, to any of the guests. When he sees a person of distinction come into the theatre, he snatches the cushion from his page, and lays it under himself. If a man walks him about his house, he extols the model, admires the gardens, never was finer furniture seen! However grossly the owner is flattered in a picture, he out-flatters

the painter; and though he allows a likeness in it, yet he flatly says it is to the disadvantage of the original. In short, his whole drift is to ingratiate himself with all men of power and substance, and to wheedle them into a gratification of his desires.

III. IMPERTINENCE.

THIS kind of Impertinence is "an habit of talking much to no purpose, or unreasonably." The garrulous man, though he never saw you before, teizes you with a long panegyric of his own wife, which, indeed, is not common; gives you a worse detail of his last night's dream; or, in a prolix description of a feast, enumerates every single dish. When his tongue is thus set a-going, he affects the censor, descants upon the reigning depravities and the degeneracy of the age; from whence, as his transitions are somewhat sudden, he falls upon the price of corn, and the number of strangers that are in town. He gravely proves that the spring is a better season than winter, and that without rain a good harvest is not to be expected; letting you know in the same breath, that he intends to dung his fields the next year, and that it is very hard to make any tolerable shift, times are so bad. His discourse is a medley of incoherencies; he acquaints you, that at the celebration of the mysteries of Ceres, Demippus had the largest torch; asks you how many pillars are in the music theatre? tells you

that yesterday he took physic, that he finds himself better, and would know what day of the month it is. If you can have patience to hear him, he runs on to the festivals in August, October, and December, expatiates on the frolics of a Bacchanalian. When you see one of these loquacious tribe coming towards you, run for your life. A fever is more eligible than to be fastened upon by one of this make, who, without any regard to time or business, will compel you to give him an hearing.

IV. RUSTICITY.

RUSTICITY is "an ignorance of the common rules of good breeding." The rustic, after breakfasting upon garlic, will accost the next man he meets with a close whisper. A sprig of lavender, and the perfumes of Arabia, are alike to his dull senses, yet his foot must not be pinched, and therefore he tramples along in a pair of overgrown shoes. He has a coarse voice, and is so boisterous that he deafens a company; his friends and relations have no share in his confidence, but his worthy privy counsellors are no other than his menial servants: you may find him pluming himself among his ignorant workmen upon his behaviour in a public debate, which he retails to them. He troubles his head so little about decency in apparel, that his skin peeps out in several parts of his body. No curiosities in his way attract his attention, but if he meets with an ox, a goat,

or an ass, he must stand to observe them, they suit his taste. If he gets sight of a piece of cold meat in his kitchen, he chops it up in a trice, that his own cookmaid may not discover him. He is not above helping her in turning the mill, and in other domestic services. He starts up from table, before he has half dined, to fodder his cattle. If any one knocks at his door, he pricks up his ears to overhear every syllable of the message. His constant attendant at table is a great house-dog, which he, every now and then, claps, and shakes by the nose, calling him, The guardian of his family. If you pay him a sum of money, he will refuse half the pieces, upon some pretence or other, though all frivolous. If he chances to wake in a stormy night, he considers to which of his neighbours he has lent a rake, a ploughshare, or a reaping hook; then orders one of his servants away, that he expects they would bring them immediately. When he comes to town, his first question is, How go hides and salt fish? The age of the moon is another main article with him. At his leaving an assembly of ladies, he tells them he must go and get his beard off. And in a public bath is so void of regard to the company, that he will roar out his catch. You may hear his nailed shoes before you see him. If Archias passes by the fishmonger's, he buys a cut of salt fish, and carries it home in his hand along the open street.

V. WHEEDLING.

FALSE complaisance is "an insinuating behaviour, without any attention to truth, decency, and honour." A man of this cast salutes another upon a public walk before he comes up to him; then quickly accosts him, catches him in his arms, and blesses such a happy meeting. After a turn or two, he begs him to name his day when he shall have the honour to see him at his own house; pours out his fulsome compliments, and does not know how to think of parting with him. If you chuse him for your arbitrator in a contest, he will not be more favourable to you than to your adversary; nor is this from a principle of probity: No; "Keep in with every body," is his motto. When in company with a knot of foreigners, he tickles their vanity, saying, that he cannot but own they have more honour and sense than his own countrymen. Invited to an entertainment, he desires the master of the house that he may have a sight of his children, and cries out, "They are the very pictures of their father," takes them up in his arms and kisses them, and mingles in their childish sports, admires their playthings, or dandles little master upon his knee, and lets him sleep in his lap, though at the same time he wishes him any where else. Besides, he is ridiculously effeminate. To be seen with a beard is frightful; his teeth take up an hour every morning. He has

an innumerable variety of clothes, which are soon cast off for others, and he smells like a perfumer's shop. At all public diversions he is sure to figure among the most brilliant company. He scorns to be seen in a tradesman's house, unless it be at his banker's. He watches opportunities to get in with the young nobility; and, at the theatre, he seats himself, with many grins and cringes, at the elbow of some man of quality. If he purchases any thing nice or pretty, he proclaims that it is not for his own use, but a present to one or other of his friends. He buys up the commodities of one country to distribute them where, as rarities, they must be acceptable: a Spartan dog to a friend in Cyzicus, and a pot of Hymettian honey to another at Rhodes; dwelling on the pleasure there is in acts of friendship and generosity. So well provided is he to oblige his friends, that a stranger would take his house for a toyshop. One room is a nursery for monkeys, squirrels, and Sicilian pigeons; another is full of curious canes, essence-bottles, and hung on all sides with odd Persian figures in tapestry. He has a little tennis court adjoining to his house, and a noble saloon, which he is not a little proud of, lending it out for a concert of music, or any other public entertainment; as he never fails to be present when he hears his house commended, he points at the person whom he has accommodated with it, saying aloud, within his hearing, "There is the happy master both of it and this entertainment."

VI. A PROFLIGATE.

THE Profligate is "one who is capable of the most flagitious enormities without shame or remorse." To take a false oath in a court of justice is a small matter with him; he offers to run greater lengths than you would have him. Abuse him, he will not resent it; character is nothing to him; to wrangle, to bluster, is his profession; and his business is to have a hand in things in which he has no concern. Such a fellow will make one among the actors in an obscene dance without ever being asked, and throw himself into the most shameless postures, and without any mask. He is an officer of his own making at all public shows; he obtrudes himself to gather the money, place the spectators, and keeps out or lets in at discretion. His scenes are often shifted; sometimes a vintner, sometimes a pimp, and sometimes a publican. To-day sees him a crier, to-morrow a cook, and next day sets up for a gamester. He is a Proteus in life. If he has a mother she may starve for him. Thievery is one of his characteristical endowments, but this also makes a gaol his ordinary mansion. Sometimes, having decoyed a crowd about him, he calls to every one that passes by, railing at any who contradict his falsehoods, and amusing the gaping people with a senseless story how his innocence has been wronged. Those who are out of hearing throng to get nearer, while those

that are near him are glad to shuffle away: most pass by without vouchsafing him a look. However, his effrontery bears him out: to one man he tells the beginning of his story, another comes in for the end; so that few or none know what he would be at. And this is the scoundrel's practice on the most solemn occasions, and in places of the greatest resort, as if he took pride that every body might see what an abandoned wretch the earth bears. He is always up to the ears in law, sometimes plaintiff, oftener defendant; some of his suits are an overmatch for him, to others he gives a turn by perjury. You often see him swaggëring among indigent litigants, to whom he does the favour of lending them little sums of money at an exorbitant interest. This blood-sucker is a perpetual tavern-haunter, where he domineers among his unhappy debtors, though gorging himself at their expense. In a word, brawling is his diversion, wickedness his element; none can come in his way without some contumelious language; the whole market-place echoes with his foul vociferations.

VII. LOQUACITY.

LOQUACITY is, briefly, "an intemperance of the tongue." "Sir, you are wide of the mark," says one of these talkers to any man, and on any subject; "I am acquainted with the whole affair, do but hear me, I will detail it to you, and set you right." If the other con-

continues speaking, " All that we have had at-
" ready," says he, " pray be more concise.
" Ay, now you are right; it is just as you say;
" that single hint sets the whole matter before
" me. There is nothing like two men arguing
" together that understand one another. But
" hold, whereabouts was I? oh! one circum-
" stance had slipped me. Ay, that is it; and I
" had a mind to see if your thoughts and mine
" tallied." With these breaks and interruptions
his antagonist loses all patience: having thus
made him quit the field, he flings himself among
a circle of men of importance who are talking
seriously, and with repeated volleys of imper-
tinance disperses the whole assembly. From
thence he bends his march to the public schools
and places of exercise, where he interrupts the
masters with a long senseless story, and hinders
the improvement of the youth. If he eyes any
one of the company stealing off, he will by all
means wait upon him, and deafens him to his
house. If he happens to learn what passed at any
public debate, that is a day's delight to spread it
through the whole town. Every circumstance
in the famous battle of Arbella he has at his
fingers' ends; and is as circumstantial in the
action between the Lacedemonians and Athe-
nians under the command of Lyfander. At
other times he tires you with an arrogant ac-
count of the vast applause with which a speech
of his was received; and, all on a sudden, starts
into invectives against the commonalty; while
some of his auditors yawn, others more wisely

give him the slip, and not a word is remembered of all he has been saying. It were pity one of these talkative creatures should be joined in any commission; they confound business by their conceit; at a public spectacle hinder all near him from attending, as at table he does from eating. Rather than his tongue should be still, he confesses frankly that silence does not agree with him, and that he is of a garrulous constitution; thus he will pass for an idle, prating fellow, rather than undergo the torture of taciturnity. He is so far proof against raillery in this point, that he laughs when his own children cry, "Dear papa, talk us asleep with one of your stories."

VIII. THE NEWSMONGER.

NEWs is "a relation of words and facts, more according to humour and partiality than truth." Now a Newsmonger, upon meeting an acquaintance, formally asks him, "Whence come you? what news? What!" says he, "nothing stirring! but I will assure you there is news indeed;" and without giving him time to answer, "Well," says he, "I will tell you something that pleases all honest hearts." And this account he has from a soldier, a trumpeter, or an engineer; that is just come from the army; his intelligence is the freshest, no body can contradict his authors, because too mean to be easily found. "The King and Polipercon," says he, "have got

“ the day, and Cassander is taken prisoner.” Ask him whether he can give credit to such account? The whole town is full of it; courier upon courier confirm it, and the battle was smartly fought on both sides: he adds, this success might be read in the looks of the magistrates; and then whispers, he is besides privately informed, that a Macedonian, who was present in the action, arrived express at a certain great man’s house above five days ago, where he has lain concealed ever since. Upon this he breaks the thread of his narrative, and falls a pitying Cassander; “ Unhappy misguided prince!” says he, “ such are the turns of Fortune! he was a brave man, to give him his due. But let me beg of you not a word of any thing of what I have told you;” and the next moment shoots away to retail the very same story among all his acquaintance. I must own this sort of fellows puzzles me, I cannot see into the end of this bustle; for besides the natural baseness of a lie, it often brings them into trouble, besides the stealing of their clothes at the bath whilst the people crowd to hear their romances. While they are fighting battles, and conquering by sea and land in the portico, have they not often been fined and disgraced for not attending in court? Not a few of these visionary politicians are, after all their harangue, at a loss for a dinner. The truth of it is, their condition is as wretched as it is ridiculous. Not a shop, a portico, or any public place, is there in which they do not sometimes take their stand

for a whole day together, racking their invention, and amusing their silly hearers with an everlasting round of forgeries.

IX. IMPUDENCE, *as the Effect of Covetousness.*

THIS vice may be defined "A disregard of reputation, when it stands in competition with interest." A man hardened by avarice shall ask another to lend him money, who has already trusted him to his cost. If at any time he cannot be off from making an oblation to the gods, instead of duly observing the ceremony, and eating part of the consecrated food at home, he lays it up in salt for another time, and goes to sup on a friend's sacrifice, out of which he also sponges a meal for his servant, whom he calls to him before all the company*, cuts him a lusty fliver, and disguising his avarice under an air of jocularitv, "Go, you rogue," says he, "there is a feast for you." He is his own market-man, and to have his full pennyworth, colleagues with the butcher, and tells him he has done him many a good turn. In the weighing of the meat he throws a piece of flesh, or, at least, a supernumerary bone, into the scale; if the butcher makes no words, he goes away quite transported; some overplus he is sure to carry away at any rate. If he attends any strangers to the theatre, he con-

* This was a custom among the Greeks.

tracts for himself and his children into the bargain. If a neighbour has made a cheap purchase, he teases him out of a share. If he is at a friend's house, he not only begs a truss of hay or straw of him, but has the impudence to desire he will send it home for him. He gravely goes into a public bath, uses all the conveniences, whilst the master of the house is brawling out for payment: "Now I have bathed," says he, "but no thanks to you:" and immediately, huddling on his clothes, walks off.

X. AVARICE.

THIS is "a passion for saving money beyond decency." A man of this cast, tho' his debtors bring their interest duly every month, yet will he dun them publicly for the odd farthing that remained upon balance of last account. If he makes an entertainment, he observes how every guest drinks. His offering at Diana's altar* is the least of any, tho' he can afford the most. Whatever you buy for him, though ever so good a pennyworth, he shakes his head, the vender has exacted. Every broken jug or plate is deducted out of his servant's wages. If his wife has lost only a piece of brass, the bed is rummaged, the coffers removed, every nook and corner pried into, and the whole house turned inside out. Whatever he sells, the purchaser has always a

* The Greeks began their public entertainments with such offerings.

hard bargain. There is no fingering any thing in his garden; he will indite any poor man who, crossing his fields, presumes to take up so much as a windfall, though it be but a withered olive. He visits his ground every day, to see if things be in *statu quo*, and the fences secure. His debtors must pay forbearance-money for any little space beyond the time of payment; he heaps interest upon interest. When he entertains his friends, he multiplies into a dozen dishes what a man of any spirit would serve up in one. He goes to market often, but returns empty-handed; the folks, says he, do not know what to ask; every thing is intolerably dear. These are the prudent instructions laid down to his wife; "Never to lend any thing: "why, child, an end of candle, a spoonful of "salt or oatmeal, a sprig of rosemary, and these "trifles, as they are called, mount to no small "matter at the year's end." His money-chest and his keys are eaten up with rust; his robe scarce hides his nakedness. A single drop of oil anoints him, and that he may save the expense of his hair, his head is always close shaved. He takes off his sandals at noon; and charges the fuller to put earth enough into his garment, that it may not soon want scouring, and also last the longer.

XI. THE SHAMELESS FELLOW.

THIS nuisance of society is "one who
"breaks through all the rules of decorum for
Q₂

“ the fake of a villanous trick.” If he meets a woman of rank and virtue, he will not let slip the opportunity of putting her to the blush by some libidinous practices. At a play, when the spectators are wrapt up in attention, he falls a-clapping, and when the whole audience applauds, he distinguishes himself by a hiss. When all the theatre is hushed, he will throw himself along upon his back, and send such a dreadful yawning that the whole house is startled, and look about to see what is the matter. He goes in a full market to the most frequented stalls, buys nuts, then falls a-cracking them, and holds a discourse with the fruiterer. He fastens on any if he but knows their name, and whatever be their haste he will have a hearing. If he sees one coming out of a court of justice, whose looks speak his misfortune, he wishes him joy of his success, that is, of having lost a good part of his estate. He hires a concert of music, buys up provisions, and if he meets any one who seems to want a meal’s meat, points to those dainties, and, by way of insult, asks him how his stomach stands? At the perfumer’s and barber’s holds forth on the exquisiteness of an entertainment to which he is going, concluding with an oath, that he intends to be very drunk to night. If he sells wine it is surely adulterated, and would give it a dash though it were for his own brother. His children must not offer to go to a play till the latter end of it, when * they may slip in for nothing. If he is

* As at our fifth act.

sent abroad upon any foreign commission, he leaves his appointments at home, and lives all the way upon his colleagues, whilst the slave that carries his baggage wants necessary sustenance. When his fellow commissioners have received the usual present from the towns through which they pass, he immediately claims his share, and as expeditiously turns it into ready money. To the bath-boy he swears his oil stinks, he cannot use it; this is a pretence to borrow some of the company. If his own servant chances to find a piece of money, halves is the word, and divides it with him. His measure for his domestics' allowance is of such a particular construction, and he so dextrous at the management of it, that with one sweep of the striker not less than one half is carried away. If he is to pay some pounds, he will take care it shall want four drachms of weight*. If he gives a treat, fragments must be gathered up, and accounted for, even to an insignificant radish.

XII. UNSEASONABLE CONVERSATION.

THE substance of this behaviour is "the ill-timing of words and actions." One of this character, though he sees his friend taken up with business of his own, intrudes upon him, details to him some trifling affair, and begs his

* A 100 made a pound Athens.

advice in it. If his mistress lyes in a raging fever, he will go and sup with her. He desires a man to be bound for him who has but just been cast as security for another. If he is subpoenaed in a cause, he comes with his depositions when the whole trial is over. At a wedding he will satirize the fair sex, and extol celibacy. He meets a man quite spent with a long journey, yet insists upon his taking a walk with him. As soon as a thing is sold, he finds out a chapman that would have given double the price. He has been known to start up in the midst of a company, and tell them a long story of what every one has seen or heard. He will thrust himself into another man's affairs, nor must he be repulsed, there is no getting rid of him but by a compliance. When any one is to offer a sacrifice, he goes without any invitation to partake of the entertainment *. If any master corrects his servant before him, Ay, said he, I beat a rascal of mine, and in revenge, forsooth, the puppy went and hanged himself. When he is chosen umpire by two persons in any contest, he raises new difficulties, and, puzzling the cause, leaves them to adjust matters by themselves. When at an entertainment, who must he needs single out to take a dance with †, but some grave person, and who, perhaps, has neither ate nor drank.

* The Greeks on a day of sacrifice either entertained their friends at home, or sent them some part of the sacrifice.

† The Greeks used not to dance till the repast was over, and tables taken away.

XIII. THE BUSYBODY.

HIS character is over officiousness, or, “an
“ impertinent forwardness to show good will
“ to others.” He will offer to undertake another
man’s business, though he knows not so much
as how to go about it. He makes a long har-
rangue to evince the reasonableness of a thing
which was palpable to every one. At an en-
tertainment his servant must fill more wine
than his guests care for. If there is a misun-
derstanding between two people, he works it
up, by his bungling mediation, to an open
quarrel. He offers to show a stranger the way
to a place, though he is not acquainted with
one step of it himself, and leads him on till
neither of them know where they are. He goes
to his general, and eagerly asks when they shall
come to blows, and what commands he shall
have for him two or three days hence? Upon
his father’s return, he whispers him, that his
mother is gone to bed, and he believes is in her
first nap. If a physician prohibits wine to a
patient, this fellow will be advising him to take
a little, and try whether it will do him any
hurt or not; that he is sure it will not. If
a woman of any note dies, he has an epitaph
for her before she is buried, in which, after an
enumeration of the names of her husband,
father, mother, and all the other relations he
can think of, he adds, they were all persons of
eminent virtue. When he appears as a witness

in any cause, he is not a little proud of it, and turning about to the people, tells them, he would have them to know this is not the first time he has been upon his oath.

XIV. THE ABSENT MAN.

ABSENCE of mind is "a certain inattention to every thing said or done." This shuttle-brained creature, after casting up a sum, shall ask one who sits by him what is the total? If he has a suit depending, the very day that it comes on it is quite out of his mind, and he goes into the country. He will drop asleep in a crowded theatre, and so remains till the clatter of the audience, striving who shall be first out, awakens him. After glutting himself, being crop-sick, he rises at midnight, and walks abroad for digestion, when the dogs fall foul of him. If he has laid up any curious present, the question on the very next day is, where such a thing can be? he does not know where to find it. An intimate acquaintance is dead, and he is invited to the funeral; there he, indeed, puts on a grave face, and weeps as well as the best, but forgetting what he is about, says, "It happened very luckily." If he is to receive money, he goes out to call some witnesses*; and in the depth of winter storms at his servant for not buying cucumbers. He makes his sons perform their exercises before

* The Greeks used to bring witnesses when they paid money.

him, but without minding what they are doing, till the poor striplings are quite spent. When he is boiling lentils, forgetting that he has seasoned them twice before, in goes another handful of salt, till he has seasoned them up to brine. When the whole country is flooded, he will look up, and say, "Methinks a moderate shower is "very refreshing." If asked how many were carried through the Sacred Gate last week *, his head runs upon something else, "Ay," says he, "if you and I had but half so many!"

XV. BRUTALITY.

BRUTALITY is "a certain vicious and insolent rudeness." Ask one of this savage temper about an acquaintance, he answers you, "I am not his keeper." Your bows are lost on him; he tosses his head another way. If you desire to know the price of any thing he has to sell, he surlily asks, "Well, what fault can your great sagacity see in it?" If he sees a man making an oblation, and imploring the gods to prosper his undertakings, he tells him with a sneer, "By my faith, you do not give something for nothing." If you accidentally tread but upon his foot, or are pushed against him, it is an unpardonable offence. After roughly denying a friend who desired to borrow some money of him, if he is prevailed upon, he throws it down, "Well, here it is," says

* To be interred out of the city, according to the law of Solon.

he, "but I suppose I may say, Farewell interest and principal." If he stumbles against a stone in the street, the word is, "Damn that cursed stone, and he who laid it." If on an appointment the party fails but one minute, he goes away, though the matter be very interesting to them both. The brute will neither sing, repeat, nor dance, at a feast*. His savageness extends even to religion; prayers and sacrifices he leaves to others; he is as impious to the gods as he is inhuman to his fellow-creatures.

XVI. SUPERSTITION.

SUPERSTITION is "a certain weakness and terror of mind, proceeding from unworthy notions of the Deity." The superstitious man, having washed his hands, and purified himself with holy water, walks with a bay leaf in his mouth, and would not for the world let it drop till sun-set. If a weazel crosses the way, he will not stir a foot till some body else has gone before him, or he has thrown three stones, which knock the unlucky omen on the head. If he sees a snake in his house, wherever it is there an altar must be built. If he meets with a consecrated pillar in a cross road, he alights, falls on his knees, pours a deal of oil upon it, and performs his devotions. If a hole be gnawed in one of his sacks, he hies away to the soothsayer to know how he must proceed under such

* The Greeks repeated some fine passages of their poets, and danced, after the entertainment was over.

a presage; and if the soothsayer honestly tells him he must get his sack mended, that does not quiet him, there is something supernatural in the case, and will never use the sack again as long as he lives. He is perpetually purifying his house with religious ceremonies, and will never tread upon a grave; he flies from a funeral, and never goes where there is a big-bellied woman. If he has dreamed something out of the way, all the augurs, wizards, and astrologers, in the country must hear of it, till he has found out what Deity injected this alarming vision. Every month he punctually attends the priests of Orpheus, to be instructed in their mysteries; his wife, without very extraordinary business, must accompany him, but at least his children and an old nurse or two. His wife head must be washed at every fountain he goes by; sometimes he hires a set of priestesses * to purify him all over with little dogs or squills. If he chances to see a lunatic, or an unhappy creature in a fit of the falling sickness, he has recourse to a particular manner of spitting, as a sure preservative against the supposed infection.

XVII. DISCONTENT.

THE person thus affected is ever complaining, and without reason. When one of his neighbours sends him a plate of any thing,

* They did it by carrying a squill or a little dog round about the person.

however nice and costly, "What," says he, "I am not good enough to eat at your master's table." At the very time his mistress is caressing him with all the sincerest endearments, "Who knows," says he gruffly, "if all this comes from your heart?" In a drought he grumbles for want of rain; and, when the showers come, then the complaint is, "This should have come sooner." If he happens to find a purse of money, "Well, some folks find treasure, nothing but some pitiful trifle or other ever comes in my way." After beating down the price of a slave, and in a manner teasing the owner out of him, "I am surely bit, it comes too cheap to be good for much." When he is complimented on the birth of a son, he answers, "Do not pester me with your speeches; I am poorer by half to-day than I was yesterday." Though he has gained his suit and all costs, he complains that his counsel omitted several weighty points. If upon any misfortune his friends have generously made a collection for him, and desire him to cheer up and have a good heart; "It cannot be," says he, "I suppose every far-thing of this must be returned some way or other, besides the plague of a perpetual obligation."

XVIII. DISTRUST.

DISTRUST is "an opinion that all the world have a design upon us." The suspi-

cious man sends his servant to market to buy in provisions; another is underhand sent away to inquire exactly what every thing costs. If he goes abroad with money, he tells it over every quarter of a mile. In bed with his wife he asks her if the chests are locked, and the house secured? and though she assures him she did every thing herself, up he gets, strikes a light, and, after a narrow inspection into every thing, can scarce close his eyes. When he goes a-money hunting, he takes witnesses along with him, lest the person should one day or other deny the debt. If his clothes are to be scoured, the point with him is not about the best workman, but the best security that they shall be returned. If any one would borrow an earthen cup of him, he generally refuses, or if by a wonder he lets it go out of his house, he is perpetually dunning to have it home again. His footman must walk before him, lest he should give him the slip. If any customer bids him set down what they have bought, he insists to be paid on the nail, for he neither can nor will run up and down after his money.

XIX. THE SLOVEN.

SLOVENLINESS is "an offensive neglect of a man's person." The Sloven will come into company when he is covered all over with scurff, and tells you for an excuse, that this distemper is hereditary in his family; but his dirty hands and long nails are owing to his

own sloth. He is as hairy as a goat, nor is he at any care to conceal it. His teeth and breath are perfectly well suited to one another, the one as black as the other offensive. He lays about him at table, and speaks with his mouth full, and his neighbours are sure to have something of his; the loathsome wretch belches in the cup as he is drinking. At the bath he is easily distinguished by the hogo of his nasty oil, and will come into genteel company with clothes all over spots. If he goes with his mother to the augurs *, what is uppermost comes out. At his oblations he will let the dish drop, and then falls a-laughing. At a concert he will clap, hum over the air, or curse the musicians, bawling out to them, "whether they will never have done?" At an entertainment he spits at random, without regard to servants or furniture.

XX. A TROUBLESOME FELLOW.

A TROUBLESOME FELLOW is "one whose conversation is disgusting without being prejudicial." He wakes an acquaintance out of a necessary sleep only to plague him with some impertinent story. If a man is just going a-ship-board, he urges him to take a turn, that they may have a farewell chat. He snatches a child from its nurse, feeds, dandles it, and falls a-lisping nonsense to it. He tells you, at dinner,

* The Greeks were then, especially, very careful of their words.

that he took physic yesterday, and that it scourged him rarely. In a full company, says he, "Pray, mother, on what day was you brought to bed of me?" After this important question he lets them know that he has a large reservoir for rain-water by him; that there is not a single pot-herb wanting in his garden; and that he keeps a plentiful table for all comers and goers of any fashion. He has, besides, some pleasant indigent fellow* to tickle his own vanity, and divert his guests.

XXI. VAIN-GLORY.

VAIN-GLORY is "a frivolous affectation of honour and distinction." The vain man never sits easy, unless at or near the upper end of the table. He carries his son to Delphos†, where, having cut off his hair, he makes an offering of it with great solemnity. He must have a black among his domestics. His payments are all made in new-coined money. Having sacrificed an ox, he dresses up the head with gaudy ribbons, and fixes it over his door, that his liberal disposition may be a town-talk. After a morning solemn cavalcade, he sends all his equipage home but his robe of state, in that he struts about all the day after. If his dog dies, there must be a formal funeral, with

* A parasite, kept by some Grecians

† The Greeks used to dedicate their children privately among some relations, but the vain-glorious man does it in sight of a multitude.

a little monument and inscription, *He was of the Malta * breed.* He consecrates a braſe ring to *Æſculapius*, often decorating it with garlands of all ſorts of the moſt ſightly flowers. Not a day paſſes without perfuming himſelf with the moſt delicious eſſences. He affects the moſt ſplendid employments, and then dazzles with his magnificence the eyes of the people. When he is to make a report of his office, having dreſſed himſelf in a white robe and a wreath of flowers, he harangues to this purpoſe: “O
 “ Athenians, my magiſtracy has been totally
 “ employed to the public good. I have ſacri-
 “ ficed whole hecatombs to the gods; there-
 “ fore you have all imaginable grounds to ex-
 “ pect great proſperity and glory.” After
 which he goes home exulting, and embracing
 his wife, tells her, that no man ever came off
 with ſuch univerſal applauſe.

XXII. THE NIGGARD.

A NIGGARDLY temper is “ a baſe ſneak-
 “ ing value of money beyond reputation.” The
 Niggard, when he wins the prize of Tragedy,
 all he offers to *Bacchus* is the rind of trees
 twiſted into a garland. At a meeting of his
 fellow-citizens for a charitable collection, he
 either riſes up and is ſilent †, or ſhuffles out,

* This iſland had a kind of little dogs much in re-
 queſt.

† They who were for giving roſe up and made their
 offer; they who would not were ſilent.

under pretence that he is always sick in a crowd. When he marries his daughter, he indeed sacrifices according to custom ; but sells all the flesh of the victim besides the priest's portion *. If he hires fellows to serve at the wedding, his bargain is, that they shall find themselves. If he is master of a ship, he lets out his own cabin and pigs in among the seamen. He is not ashamed to stalk home from market with a joint of meat, and a great bundle of herbs, under his robe. While his robe is scouring, he is forced to keep house in cuerpo. He turns the deaf ear to any poor friend fallen into misfortunes ; but if he has first sight of him, the hard-hearted villain is sure to avoid him. His wife must do without a constant maid, but bargains with one to attend her on a formal visit. He himself washes the house, makes the bed ; and when he is for making a figure, instead of a new gown, he turns his old one, and then the occasion must be very important.

XXIII. OSTENTATION.

OSTENTATION is “ a vain humour of valuing ourselves beyond reality.” The ostentatious man standing upon the public quay, amidst a resort of foreigners, who are not acquainted with him, expresses an uneasiness for his effects at sea, and wonders he has no news of his ships. He talks of large sums of money

* Legs and entrails.

out at use; and expatiates on a multiplicity of pecuniary projects. If he picks up a stranger upon the road, his first romance is, that he served under Alexander the Great, and that they had hot service; but that it afforded special plunder, of which he took care not to go without his share. "Your European workmen," says he, very gravely, "are not fit to hold a candle to the Asiatics." He shows a surprise that his fellow-soldier Antipater, by the last letter he received from him, is returned to Macedonia. He assures you, that though the magistrates of Athens had complimented him with an exemption from customs, he declined the privilege, as a detriment to the state-revenue, and a kind of superiority which his fellow-citizens might not well digest. He often talks of his largess to the people in a dearth of provisions, both which are alike imaginary; and to make the story the more circumstantial, the corn then distributed did not cost him less than five talents; but immediately after, considering that six hundred fictitious persons partook of it, he finds the sum was ten talents original cost, exclusive of freight and other expenses. At a fair he has all the finest horses rode before him, and then superciliously turns his back upon the jockeys. He rambles from shop to shop, as if he would buy some very rich clothes, and makes a din with his servant * for coming abroad without gold about him.

* Among the Ancients the servants carried the money.

Though he rents his house, he shall confidently tell a stranger that it is of his father's building, with some additions and embellishments of his own; but that he is still straitened for entertaining company, and has some thoughts of parting with it.

XXIV. PRIDE.

PRIDE is "a contempt of others shown in the deportment." If you meet a proud man, though walking vacantly for his amusement, and would talk with him of a matter of great concern, you must come after supper. If he does a man a kindness, he will avoid receiving his acknowledgments till they meet in a full assembly. He will never make the first advance in any affair. It is not a single attendance which will dispatch a tradesman with him, he must dangle after him, at least, a fortnight. In the streets he never looks about him, or knows any one he meets. When he gives an entertainment, his guests must be somebody; if he vouchsafes to sit down with them, he usually orders the servants to take care the company want nothing. He always sends notice of any visit he intends. When he is eating or dressing, no one is admitted into his presence. He is above minding his own business, that fatigue is the province of a servant. He never relaxes himself in his most familiar letters. The ordinary phrase of, "You will oblige me if you do this," never drops from his pen; but

these, "I expect that this be done, and exactly as I have ordered it; I insist my orders be immediately complied with;" are the softest touches of his superb phraseology.

XXV. COWARDICE.

COWARDICE is "a timorous and abject state of mind." The Coward on shipboard transforms a promontory into a pirate; and at every rock he sees, cries, "Bless me! there is some vessel cast away!" The ship no sooner begins to have a motion, but he asks the master in a fright, "If he is sure all aboard are initiated *?" If he sees the pilot going to tack about, he turns pale, and asks him, whether any danger is in sight? He tells the person who sits next him a dismal story of a horrible dream he had last night, when, all in an agony, he strips himself, that he may be ready to swim for his life, or begs of the master to set him ashore any where. If he is obliged to serve in the army, he is seized with a panic fear at the sight of a few bushes, and calling his fellow-soldiers about him, points to the place, and tells them, his eyes are not good enough to distinguish at that distance whether they are friends or foes. If he sees the armies engaged, and men begin to drop on both sides, he tells his comrades, that in the hurry of preparation this

* The Ancients never sailed with any of known impiety, without previously initiating them into the mysteries of some deity, to procure his protection in the voyage.

morning he forgot his sword; and then scours off to his tent to fetch it. There he sends out his boy to see how it goes in the field, and, in the mean time, hides his sword under his pillow, nor wants to find it till the action is over. If, in the mean time, any wounded man is brought, he runs to meet him, cheers him up, dresses his wounds, keeps away the flies from them, and is as busy as can be, for a pretence to avoid the fray. While he is thus taken up with his patient, trumpets, perhaps, sound a fresh charge: What a confounded din is there? cries he! poor soul, there is no getting a minute's rest for their damned bellowing. He is not so careful of his patient as to forget to besmear himself with blood, and makes his fellow-soldiers believe that he had a tough bout to bring off one of his friends, whom he is taking care of in his tent.

XXVI. AN OLIGARCHIST.

AN OLIGARCHIST “affects sovereignty “without any regard to profit.” At an election of a coadjutor to the chief director of public shows and triumphs he puts up for it. Of all the generous verses in Homer there is none he relishes so much as that despotic sentence,

Οὐκ ἀγαθὸν πολυμοιρανίῳ εἰς κοίρανος ἔσθαι.

A multitude of rulers ever shun:
Happy the city that is ruled by one!

His common way of talking is, “Let us hold a

“ particular assembly and determine on the
 “ state of affairs; these are without the verge
 “ of the commonalty, the administration should
 “ not be prostituted.” If he imagines any one
 has affronted him, he declares the same city cannot hold them both. When he appears in public, his dress is rich, his beard is trimmed, and his nails close pared; thus strutting about, he insinuates to his friends, that unless things are speedily brought into another channel, he has thoughts of retiring from public business. Then he adds, besides the noise and bustle of the people in courts of justice, is it not past all bearing that at a public assembly an old-fashioned creature shall sit on the same bench with me, only because, forsooth, he is my fellow-citizen? The popular orators are his mortal aversion, and his heart rankles at the sight of a plebeian of distinguished merit. He does not spare even Theseus himself, who, he says, was wretchedly out in his politics in first establishing this disgraceful equality among the people of Athens. These are the usual topics upon which this restless incendiary is perpetually enlarging among strangers, and by which he stimulates those of his own faction.

XXVII. OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS, *acquired too late.*

THIS person “is for being dexterous in exercises in his old age.” After squandering away his docile youth, he reads the Poets at

sixty, and applies himself to study sciences in the decline of his faculties. To show his proficiency, he repeats passages at entertainments *, but the dotard unluckily forgets whereabouts he was. His own son instructs him in the use of his arms, and all the military motions and attitudes. He will get upon a mettlesome horse, and, to show his skill in riding, sets the beast a-prancing and curvetting till he loses his seat and is laid in the mire, or carried home with broken bones. You often see the old fool darting at a statue, or shooting at a mark with his foot-boy; however, out of an impertinence natural to a superannuated scholar, he pretends to instruct his masters at the same time he is learning of them. He is for giving specimens of his skill and agility in the public bath, where he diverts the spectators with a thousand languid efforts and lumpish gesticulations.

XXVIII. SLANDER.

SLANDER consists “in expressions injurious to the character of another.” The Detractor, being asked who such a new man is? traces his whole pedigree for you: “His father’s first name was Sofia †, though in the army he was pleased to take upon him that of Sosistratus, and afterwards, God knows how, came to be made a freeman of Athens. His

* The Greeks used to sing or recite verses at their feasts.

† A name appropriated to slaves among the Greeks.

"mother was a Thracian servant-maid, and, "you know," continues he, with a malicious smile, "the Thracians are all of noble blood; so nobly descended, is it not strange he should be such a worthless fellow?" Then, as a second sting at his mother, "she was one of those venerable matrons that keep houses* for the accommodation of both sexes." If he hears one who is absent spoken ill of, "Right," says he, "I could never endure that fellow; he is a most abominable wretch. Eye him well; Rogue shows itself in his countenance. The narrow-souled dog allows his wife three halfpence for a dinner. She must take up with a cold bath in the midst of December." If he with whom he sided chances to leave the company, he takes him to pieces after the same virulent manner. In short, consanguinity or gratitude does not check his career, nor is the grave a shelter from his defamations.

* They kept bawdyhouses on the highways.

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M. DE LA BRUYERE'S.

S P E E C H

Upon his Admission into the

FRENCH ACADEMY,

JUNE the 25th, 1693.

VOL. II.

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P R E F A C E.

THOSE gentlemen, who, being asked their opinion of my Speech to the French Academy, when I had the honour to be admitted one of their society, superciliously answered, That *I had drawn Characters*, thinking thereby to disparage it, did, in effect, give the most advantageous idea of it that I myself could have desired: for the Public having approved that way of writing, whereto I have applied myself for some years, such an answer was prepossessing it in my favour. The only question was, whether characterising was not foreign to such a speech? And this question vanishes when the reader is informed, that it is an established custom for the admittance-speech of a new Academician to consist of eulogiums on the King, Cardinal Richlieu, Chancellor Seguier, the person whom he succeeds, and the French Academy. Of these five eulogiums, four are personal; now, let me desire my censurers that they would state the difference between personal eulogiums and panegyrical characters, in so distinct and striking a manner, that I may be sensible of it, and own my fault. Then, should I, in any other future harangue, relapse into painting, their criticism may be attended to; and, perhaps, I may be condemned: I say, perhaps; since characters, or, at least, the ima-

ges of things and persons are unavoidable in a speech, every writer being a painter, and every excellent writer an excellent painter.

I confess I added to these portraits, which were customary, the praises of each of those illustrious men who compose the French Academy; and my critics ought to pardon me for it, if they consider that, as much to spare their modesty as to avoid characters, I omitted their persons, and only spoke of their works, upon which I made critical encomiums, more or less extensive, according as the subjects on which they wrote seemed to require. But, say some, I praised Academicians still living and present. It is true, but I praised them all: what single individual would complain? The proceeding, they add, is altogether new, and unprecedented. I allow it; I own I struck out of the common road, and abstained from common places, and proverbial phrases, and obsolete decorations, of an infinite number of speeches on the like occasion. Was it then so difficult for me to introduce Rome and Athens, the Lyceum, and the Porch, into the eulogium of that learned body? “To be at the summit of one’s wishes
“by being an Academician: to protest that the
“day on which we first enjoy so exquisite a
“happiness is the most glorious day of one’s
“whole life: to doubt whether the honour we
“have just now received is a reality, or only
“a dream: to hug one’s self with the pleasure of drinking, for the future, at the fountain head, the purest streams of French



“ eloquence : not to have accepted, not to
“ have desired, such a place, for any other rea-
“ son, but to improve by the talents of so
“ many persons of such enlightened under-
“ standings : to promise that, however unwor-
“ thy of the honour of their choice, he will
“ do his utmost to make himself, in some sort,
“ worthy of it.” Are these, and a hundred
such compliments so refined, or so little known,
that I could not have hit on them, adopted
them, and gained applause by them ?

If, therefore, I was of opinion, that whatever
Envy or Malice may report of the French Aca-
demy, whatever they may say of its golden
age and declension, it has never, since its esta-
blishment, been able to boast of so great a num-
ber of gentlemen, eminent for all literary ac-
quisitions and improvements of all branches of
learning, as its present members : if, I say, I
also could not expect that this Society will ever
hereafter make a more honourable figure, or
be drawn in a more favourable light ; and if,
accordingly, I laid hold of the opportunity,
have I done any thing which ought to expose
me to the least reproach ? Cicero could, with
impunity, praise Brutus, Cesar, Pompey, Mar-
cellus, who were living, who were present : he
praised them several times, he praised them, and
them only, in the senate-house, oftentimes to
the face of their enemies, always before an as-
sembly jealous of their merit, and to whom the
pompous display of the virtues of great men
might excite other jealousies and alarms than

can be supposable in the French Academy. Now I praised the Academicians, and praised them all; yet have been censured: how should I then have been handled if I had presumed to find fault?

“ I am come from hearing,” says Theobald, “ a long-winded piece of stuff, which made me yawn twenty times, and tired me beyond all bearing.” This is what he said; and you shall hear how he and some few others, who pin their faith on his sleeve, proceeded. They set out for Versailles the very next day after the Speech; there, going from house to house, they told every body they saw, that the night before I had been drawing out a harangue, which had neither style nor common sense in it; but stuffed with extravagancies and downright satire. On their return to Paris, they dispersed themselves in several parts of the Town, where they spit so much venom against me gave themselves such a loose in defaming this Speech, as well in company as in letters to their country friends; and were so successful in decrying this unfortunate assemblage of words among those who did not hear it; that they took upon them to insinuate to the Public, either that the *Characters* done by the same hand were good for nothing, or that, if good for any thing, I was not the author of them, but furnished with what was most tolerable by a worthless woman of my acquaintance. They likewise averred, that I was not capable of writing any thing of length or con-

nexion, not so much as a Preface; so impracticable did they think it, even for one who has got a habit of thinking, and writing what he thinks, to have the art of linking his thoughts together, and making transitions.

Nor was this all; contrary to the laws of the French Academy, which forbids Academicians to write, or cause to be written, against any of the fraternity, they hounded out upon me two authors, associated in one Gazette *; these they instigated not to publish against me a delicate and ingenious satire, a work too much beneath either of those gentlemen, *easy to manage, and of which an ordinary genius is capable*; but to pelt me with those gross and personal invectives, so difficult to meet with, so painful to pronounce or write, especially to such who, I am willing to believe, have some remains of modesty, some value for their reputation.

And, indeed, I make no doubt but the public is, by this time, stunned and fatigued with hearing, for so many years past, a couple of old ravens croaking at any whose sportive flight and nimble wing have raised them to some glory by their writings. These lugubrious birds seem, by their continual vociferations, to impute to them that universal disesteem which necessarily rises against whatever they themselves print and publish; as if others were the cause of their want of strength and breath, or were responsible for the lumpishness of their compositions. If there happens to be

* *Merc. Gallant.*

printed a short-lived moral treatise, too stupid to excite even their jealousy, they praise it willingly, or yet more willingly say nothing of it: but if it be such that the World talk of it, they point all their batteries against it; prose, verse, nothing escapes their censure; every thing becomes a prey to that implacable hatred which they have conceived against those whose correct pieces, whose wit and solidity, bids fair for the public approbation. There is no knowing what sort of morality will entirely please these gentlemen; we must even restore them that of La Serre or Desmarets; or it is ten to one if they will not say, there is nothing like the Christian Instructor and the Holy Court. There is a new satire* published against vice in general, and which, in a nervous strain, and with a pen of steel, aims its strokes against avarice, gaming, chicanery, effeminacy, sobriety, and hypocrisy, wherein no body is either named or delineated, where no woman of virtue either can or ought to think herself pointed at. A Bourdaloue in the pulpit never drew more lively or more innocent portraits of guilt; no matter for that, it is a slander, all contumely. This has been for some time their cry, and all their cavil against books of morality, which are in any vogue: they take every thing literally, they read them as history, without any allowance for poetry and figure; and, accordingly, condemn them: they cull out some weak places in them,

* M. Boileau's tenth satire.

and so there are in Homer, Pindar, Virgil, Horace: indeed, where are there not? except, perhaps, in their own quintessentiated writings. If Bernino has not worked the marble, nor expressed all figures with equal nature and beauty, even in his least happy pieces certain masterly strokes are easily observed, though in company with others which are less so. that show incontrovertibly the excellency of the artist. If it be an horse, the mane is turned with a bold hand, it flutters, and seems to be the sport of the wind; the eye is fiery, the nostrils breathe flame and life, and a master's chissel is seen again in a thousand places; it is not in his copiers or emulators to reach his faults by their masterpieces; it is plain it is the error of an able man, an oversight of a Praxiteles.

But who are these tender and scrupulous souls who cannot bear to see vice declaimed against, even though without offence to any particular person, and without naming the vicious? Are they Carthusians or hermits? are they Jesuits, those pious and ingenious men? are they such as live in cloisters or abbeys? no; all these read such works in private, and in public at their recreations; they recommend the reading of them to their pupils and scholars, they search the shops for them, they allow them a place in their libraries. Were not they the first who discovered the plan and economy of the Book of Characters? did they not observe, that of the sixteen chapters which compose it, fifteen are successively and totally em-

ployed in detecting the fallacy and ridicule of the objects of human passions, and demolishing such obstacles as at first weaken and afterwards extinguish any influential knowledge of God: and that those chapters are only preparatives to the sixteenth and last, wherein Atheism is attacked, and, perhaps, routed; wherein the proofs of a God, such, at least, as weak man is capable of digesting, are produced; wherein the providence of God is defended against the insult of Libertines? Who then are they that decry so serious and so useful a work with these continual eruptions, "It is all slander, all contumely?" Named they shall be, they are poets; but what poets? surely the authors of sacred hymns, or translators of psalms; the Godeaux or the Corneilles? no; they are no other than stanza-makers, or composers of whining amorous elegies, *beaux esprits*, who turn a Sonnet upon a *Mistress's Absence* or her *Return*, who make an Epigram upon a *fine Neck*, or a Madrigal upon *Enjoyment*. These are they whose squeamish conscience cannot bear that (however cautious I am in sparing particular persons) I should endeavour in my Book of *Characters* to explode, if possible, all vices both of the heart and the head, to render mankind rational, and put them in a way to become Christian. Such are the Theobalds, or, at least, their understrappers.

They have gone yet farther; for varnishing over their vexation at their scanty portion of praise in comparison of the other Academi-

cians, they have presumed to make dangerous applications of that part of my Speech where, exposing myself singly in the cause of all men of learning against their most irreconcilable enemies, the moneyed men, whom enormous opulency, or fortunes made by oblique ways, together with the favour of the great men, which it necessarily procures, prompts to a supercilious arrogance of that part of my Speech, I say, where, indeed, I address a sharp apostrophe to all such in general, but which it is by no means allowable to transfer from them to any single man, or any other body of men.

Thus I am used, perhaps, at the instigation of the Theobalds, by such who persuade themselves that an author writes satire only to amuse them, and not at all to instruct them by a sound moral; instead of applying the strokes thereof to themselves, and improving the whole to their amendment, they make it their business, if possible, to pick out which of any of them may be construed to be pointed at; neglecting every thing which has the appearance of an instructive remark, or a serious reflection, tho' almost the whole Book consists of such, they dwell upon nothing but the Portraits or Characters; and after having explained them their own way, upon a presumption that they have found out the original, publish to the world long lists, and, as they call them, *Keys*, but which are indeed false keys, and as useless to them as they are injurious to the persons whose names are therein deciphered, and espe-

cially to the writer, who, instead of a philosopher is made a libeller.

I was so cautious as to protest in my Preface against all such interpretations, which some knowledge of mankind made me foresee; I even hesitated some time whether I should make my Book public, and hovered between a desire of being useful to my country by my writings and the fear of furnishing matter to some people's malignity. But since I have been so weak to publish these *Characters*, what bank shall I raise against this flood of explanations, which already has pervaded the Town, and will soon reach the Court? Shall I protest seriously, and confirm it with horrible oaths, that I am neither the author of, nor so much as an accomplice in making, those *Keys* which are spread abroad; that I never delivered out any of them; that my most familiar friends know very well I always refused to let them have any such thing; that persons of rank and figure at Court have despaired of getting the secret out of me? Would not this be just the same thing as if I should fret and plague myself in maintaining that I am not a villain, a man void of shame, morals, and conscience; in short, such a one as the above-mentioned Gazetteers have endeavoured to represent me to the world?

But, beside, how could I be the distributor of these sort of keys, since, considering what they are, I could not possibly forge them myself? Different from each other, how could I make them all serve for the same lock, I mean,

for the understanding of my remarks? can keys, indicating courtiers and citizens whom I never spoke to, nor have any knowledge of, come from me, or be distributed by my hand? was I likely to give out those which are forged at Romorentin, Mortagne, and Belesinne, which are differently applied to the bailiff's wife, the assessor's wife, the president of the election, the provost of the Marshalsea, and the provosts of the Collegiate? The names are, indeed, very plainly set down, but help me never the more to know the persons. If I might be indulged a spark of vanity, I should imagine that my *Characters* have pretty well expressed man in general, since they resemble so many individuals, that every one thinks he finds there his neighbour, or his countryman. I did, indeed, paint from life, but did not always mean Mr Such-a-one, or Mrs Such-a-one, in my book of *Characters*. I did not hire myself to the Public to draw only such portraits as should be real and resembling, for so flagitious are the excesses of some, so unnatural the freaks of others, as to appear beyond all credit, and I should be charged with fiction. I was yet more on my guard; I took one lineament from this person, and another from that, and from these several lineaments, which may happen to concur in one and the same person, I have drawn a probable portrait, studying much less to divert the reader by characterizing, or, as my censurers say, by satirizing, than to lay before him faults to avoid, and examples to imitate.

Me thinks, therefore, I ought to be less blamed than pitied by those who shall see their names in such scurrilous lists, which I disown, blame, and condemn, with the detestation they deserve. I dare even expect this justice from them, that without fastening upon a moral author, who had not the least intention to offend them by his Work, they will hunt out the interpreters, whose villany is inexcusable. What I myself say I say, and not what they take upon them to make me say. I name the persons I would name, and always with a view of praising their virtue, and recommending their merit. I write their names in capitals that they may not be overlooked, and that such shining examples may animate the reader with a proper emulation. Had I set real names to characters less obliging, I should have saved myself the trouble of borrowing names from ancient history, of making use of initial letters which have nothing but a vague and indefinite signification, of finding out a thousand shifts and subterfuges to mislead those who read me, and make them weary of applications. Thus cautious has been my conduct in composing my book of *Characters*.

As for the Speech, which seemed so prolix and insupportable to the leader of the malcontents, I know not, indeed, how I came to set about thanking the Academy in an oratorical discourse. Some zealous Academicians had, indeed, chalked out the way for me, but they are not many; nor has their zeal for the honour

and reputation of the Academy had more followers. I might have done like those who, being candidates for a place in this Society, without having ever written any thing, though they were able, declare, with an air of sufficiency, the evening before their reception, "They have but two words to say, which will not take up a moment, though capable of speaking a long time, and to the purpose."

On the contrary, I judged, that as no artist is admitted into any company, or can obtain his letters of freedom, without producing some specimen, so, and with much more reason, ought a man, upon his being made a member of a body which only supports itself by eloquence, to make an effort in this kind, which may justify the honour of their choice. I was likewise of opinion, that since profane eloquence seems no longer to flourish at the bar, from whence it has been banished through a necessity of expedition, and since it ought no longer to be admitted into the pulpit, where it has too long wanted, the only remaining asylum for it was the French Academy! That there was nothing more natural, nor more conducive to the celebrity of that society, than if, at the admittance of any new Academicians, they could sometimes draw the Court and City to their assemblies, out of curiosity to hear pieces of eloquence of a just extent, the elaborate performances of masters, and of those whose characteristic it is to excel in the art of speaking.

If I have failed in my aim to deliver an elo-

quent discourse, I hope, at least, I have disculpated myself from the charge of prolixity: besides, if the people of Paris, who were assured beforehand of its being flat, satirical, and extravagant, have complained that they had been imposed upon by false insinuations; if Marli, whither the curiosity of hearing it had spread itself, did not ring with the applauses given to the criticism on it; if it could escape at Chantilly, that fatal rock of insipid pieces; if the French Academy, to whom I appealed as supreme judge in these sort of performances, did, in an extraordinary assembly, adopt this of mine, caused it to be printed by their own bookseller, and lodged among their archives; if it was not actually composed in an affected, harsh, and uneven style, nor crammed with insipid or hyperbolical praises, such as embellish the prologues to operas and dedicatory epistles; it ought no longer to be a wonder that Theobald is carping at it. The time is coming, under favour I speak it, when the public approbation shall not be the absolute standard of a work; but the great seal to its reputation shall be the disgust it gave to a certain set of people; their yawnings shall be so many proofs of its excellence. Will they, now they find this Speech has succeeded in spite of all their machinations, and since they know that two booksellers went to law who should print it; will they, I say, disown their taste, and retract their sentence on it when it was first spoken? Will they give me leave to publish, or only to suspect another rea-

son for their acrimonious censures, quite different from any inward persuasion that it deserved them? It is well known that, when that very worthy gentleman with whom I had the honour to be admitted into the French Academy was begged, solicited, nay, teased, to print his speech, even by those who were for suppressing mine, he resolutely refused them, and told them, "That he neither could nor ought to approve of so odious a distinction, which they were for making, between him and myself: that the preference which they gave to his speech with so much affectation and warmth, was so far from being any compliment to him, as they thought, that, on the contrary, it gave him a real uneasiness: that two speeches, equally innocent, pronounced on the same day, ought to be printed at the same time." He afterwards expressed himself very obligingly, both in public and private, how much it troubled him, that the two authors of the Gazette above mentioned had made the praises they were pleased to bestow on him subservient to their purpose of affronting me, and undervaluing both my Speech and Book of *Characters*; and therefore condescended to make such explanations and excuses to me as were far above what I deserved. If, therefore, it should be inferred from this conduct of the Theobalds, that they falsely believed they stood in need of comparisons, and of a vapid, colloquing, despised speech, as a necessary foil for that of my colleague, they ought, in order to clear them-

selves from this disgraceful suspicion, to answer, that they are no courtiers, nor tied down to any man's favour; nor that they are no flatterers, no parasites: that, on the contrary, they are sincere, and that they ingenuously spoke their thoughts of the plan, style, and sentiment, of my speech to the French Academy. I urge, that it had on its side the judgment of the Court and City, of the Nobility and Commonalty; they again boldly reply, the Public has its taste, and they have theirs: an answer which stops my mouth, and puts an end to all disputes. It is true, it more and more alienates me from any attention to please them: for if I am blessed with a moderate share of health, and few more years of life, my utmost ambition will be, that my Works may always set the Theobalds and the Public at variance.

A
S P E E C H
TO THE
FRENCH ACADEMY,
ON

MONDAY, JUNE 15, 1693.

Gentlemen,

IT were difficult to have the honour of appearing in such an assembly, to have before one's eyes the French Academy, to have read the history of its establishment, and not immediately to think on him to whom it is owing; and likewise not to be persuaded that there is nothing more natural, and which should displease you less, than to introduce that eulogium which custom and duty require, with some panegyrical touches, so expressive of that great Cardinal, as strongly to revive the memory of him.

He is not a person easily expressed by florid words, or rich figures; by speeches, not so much adapted to illustrate the merit which is the sub-

ject of them, as to display the fire and vivacity of the orator. Peruse the reign of Lewis the Just, that is the life of Cardinal Richlieu, that is both the eulogium of him and of the Prince who produced his merit to the world. What can I add to facts still so recent and so memorable? Open his Political Testament, weigh that Work; it is the picture of his mind; his soul there unfolds itself in all its immense capacity: there you discover the sources of his conduct and actions, of so many and such great events, which signalized his administration; there it is easily observable, that a man who could *think* so boldly and justly could *act* surely and with success; and that he who performed such great things, either never writ, or ought to have writ, as he did.

To his strong and consummate genius were known every spring and every mystery of government; he knew whatever was wise, decorous, and sublime, in administration; he respected foreign states, sensible of the weight of their alliance; to enemies he opposed allies; he attended to the foreign and domestic interests of the kingdom, and forgot none but his own; a laborious and languishing life, frequently exposed, was the reward of such an exalted virtue. Though the depository of his master's treasures, loaded with his favours, director and dispenser of his finances, yet it cannot be said of him that he died rich. Would you believe it, Gentlemen, this serious, this austere soul, formidable to the enemies of the state, inexorable

to the factious, immerfed in negotiations, sometimes taken up in the fuppreffion of herefy, sometimes in baffling the meafures of a league, and sometimes in meditating a conquest, found leifure to be learned, relifhed the *belles lettres*, and cherifhed the profefors. Compare yourselves, if you dare, to the great Richlieu, ye who are devoted to Fortune, who, by the fuccefs of your private affairs, think yourselves fit to be intrufted with thofe of the public! who fet up for fagacious geniufes and able heads; who fay "You don't mind learning; that you never read, nor ever will read;" either with a defign to reflect on the ufefulness of learning, or to feem as if you fcorned to be beholden to others, but drew all from your own fund; know, that Cardinal Richlieu had learning; did read: I do not barely fay he had no averfion for men of letters, but that he loved them, favoured them, cherifhed them; that he procured them privileges and penfions; that he united them in a celebrated afsembly; he instituted the French Academy.

Yes, ye rich ambitious men, who defpife virtue, who sneer at every affociation which is not founded upon ftocks and intereft! this was one of the plans of that great minifter, who, born a ftatelman, was devoted to the ftate; a folid eminent genius, whose motives were rather more noble than his performances; who never loft fight of the public good, as the chief glory of the monarchy; incapable of adopting any idea which was not worthy of himfelf, of

the prince whom he served, and of France, the dear object of all his studies and meditations.

He knew the force and usefulness of eloquence, the power of speech, which gives the due prevalence to reason, which induces men to commiseration and probity, which inspires the soldier with intrepidity, which appeases commotions, which reduces to their duty the unlettered stubborn multitude: he was not ignorant what were the fruits of history and poetry; what the necessity of grammar, the basis and foundation of other sciences; and that, in order to carry these things to such a degree of perfection as might make them advantageous to the Public, it was requisite to institute a society wherein Virtue only should be admitted, and the suffrages be the impartial reward of a superior merit in literature; to say no more, this, Gentlemen, was your beginning, and this your rule, to which I am the only exception.

Recall to your minds (it is no comparison), recall that great and first of councils, where the fathers who composed it were remarkable for some mutilated member, or other marks of their fortitude in the fury of persecution; they seemed to hold, from their wounds, a right of sitting in that general assembly of the whole church: so neither was there any of your illustrious predecessors whom the people did not press to see, whom they did not point at in public places, whom they did not extol as the author of some finished piece, which had intitled him to a seat in this growing Academy,

of which they were, in a manner, the founders: such were those great artists in speech, those primary masters of French eloquence: such are you, Gentlemen, who, for knowledge or merit, are not inferior to any of your predecessors.

One * among you, as correct in his language as if he had learned it by rules and principles; as elegant in foreign tongues as if they were natural to him; and, in whatever idiom he writes, seems always to speak that of his own country: he has undertaken, he has completed, a laborious translation, which the brightest wit might be proud to own, and which the most pious person might wish to have executed.

Another † revives Virgil among us, transfuses into our tongue the graces and enrichments of the Latin; makes romances which have an end, banishes from them prolixity and incredibility, judiciously substituting, in lieu of them, nature and probability.

Another ‡, more uniform than Marot, and more a poet than Voiture, has the sportiveness, the turn, and simplicity, of both; instructs while he laughs; persuades men to virtue by the organs of beasts; confers a sublimity on the meanest subject; peculiar in his way of writing, always an original, whether he invents, or whether he translates; he surpasses his models; is himself an inimitable model.

This writer || excels Juvenal, comes up to

* The Abbot Regnier.

† M. de Segrais.

‡ M. de la Fontaine.

|| M. Boileau.

Horace, seems to create the thoughts of another, and to make whatever he handles his own. He has, in what he borrows from others, all the graces of novelty, and all the merit of invention: his verses, strong and harmonious, flowing from genius, but wrought by the most delicate art, will be read, even when the language is obsolete, and will be the last remains of it; the censure in them is poignant, judicious, and innocent, if it be allowable that what is really bad be called bad.

Another favourite of the Muses comes after, a person who has been praised, applauded, admired; whose verses are known every where, and pass into a proverb; supremely excellent in the drama, he has engrossed every theatre: it is true, he does not dispossess the other, but establishes himself with him; nor does the world wonder at the conjunction. Some cannot endure that Corneille, the great Corneille, should be preferred to him, and some others, that he should be so much as equalled to him: they appeal to another age, they wait for the death of some old men, who, being pleased indiscriminately with whatever recalls their former years, do, perhaps, inwardly love nothing better in *Oedipus* than the recurrence of their youth.

What shall I say of that noble person † who has so often made the envious critics snarl, and so often silenced them? whom, against his modest will, the world admires; who super-

* M. Racine.

† M. Bossuet, Bishop of Meaux.

abounds, if I may so say, in the great number and eminence of his talents; an orator, an historian, a divine, a philosopher: what a vast compass of learning! Such exquisite eloquence, whether in his conversation, in his writings, or in the pulpit! A defender of religion, a luminary of the church, and, to anticipate the language of posterity, a father of the church. What is he not? name, if you can, Gentlemen, one virtue of which he is not supremely possessed.

Shall I likewise touch upon your last choice, so worthy of you? What things were said to you in the place where I now stand? I remember them; and after what you have heard, how dare I speak? and how can you condescend to hear me? The delicacy and energy of that rare genius* is felt in all its emanations, whether he preaches extemporally, whether he pronounces a studied discourse, or delivers his thoughts in conversation. Always master of the ear and heart of those who hear him, none can envy such an assemblage of talents, such sublimity and depth, or such ease and politeness: they are happy enough in hearing him, in feeling what he says, and how he says it: they ought to think it a great point gained, if they can carry away his reflections to improve by them. How great an acquisition have you made in this illustrious person! to whom am I associated!

Were I not, Gentlemen, so much restrained

* L' Abbé Boleau.

by time and decency, I could gladly proceed to the praises of every member of this Academy, in characters more strongly marked, and more animated expressions. All the different talents diffeminated among mankind centre among you. Would we look for orators, who scatter from the pulpit all the flowers of a masculine eloquence; who enforce a sound morality with all the aids of gesture and all the beauties of language; who engage the attention by a beautiful choice of words; who create a love of religious solemnities, and cause our temples to be crowded? let not such, I say, be looked for elsewhere; they are among you. Do we admire a profound literature, which turns over the archives of antiquity, to draw from thence things buried in oblivion, which have escaped the most curious researches, which to other men are unknown; a memory, a method, an accuracy, in which not the mistake of a single year, sometimes not so much as of a single day, is to be found in the series of many centuries? this admirable learning is also among you, is distinguishedly so in some of this illustrious assembly. If we are curious in the gift of tongues, accompanied with an exact knowledge of ancient times, and of an ability to relate the modern with as much perspicuity as truth; such rare qualities are not wanting among you; they are conspicuous in one and the same subject. If we seek for men of capacity and experience, who, by the privilege of their employments, make their prince speak with dignity

and accuracy ; or others, who, in arduous negotiations, have successfully exerted their literary talents ; others again, who consecrate their parts and attention to the affairs of the public, after having employed them in the judicial with an equal reputation ; all these this assembly affords, and it is a pain to me not to name them.

If learning joined to eloquence be your delight, you will soon be gratified, only reserve your whole attention for him who is to speak after me. In short, in what are you deficient ? You have writers surpassing in prose and verse ; poets in all kinds of poetry, whether moral, devout, heroic, gallant, or jocular ; imitators of the Ancients ; rigid critics ; imaginative, delicate, inexhaustible geniuses, shining alike in the different spheres of solid conversation and the gay circle. Again, I say, to what persons, to what great subjects, am I associated !

But with whom do you condescend to admit me ? After whom do I make this public address of thanks ? However, let him not, though so praise-worthy, apprehend that I shall put his modesty to any pain being so near me. It would be no less easy to interrupt me than he would be inclined to it. I rather ask you, to whom have you nominated me the successor, to a man who has Virtue * !

It sometimes happens, Gentlemen, that they who owe you the praises of the illustrious dead,

* M. L' Abbé de la Chambre.

whose places they fill, are often divided among several points, equally deserving an honourable mention. In Monsieur L'Abbé de la Chambre, you chose a man so pious, so tender, so charitable; so commendable for the virtues of the heart, whose manners were so pure and so Christian-like, who was so thoroughly penetrated with religion, so entirely constant to the performance of his duty, that writing well was one of his least qualities; his virtues cast a kind of shade over his learning and eloquence; his life and conduct are applauded still more than his works. I would indeed chuse to pronounce a funeral oration on him rather than barely expatiate on his learning and intellects. Merit in him was not an acquisition, but a patrimony, an inheritance; if, at least, we may judge of it by the choice of him who surrendered his heart, his confidence, his whole person, to that family, and who made it, as it were, a collateral branch of yourselves, since it may be said that he adopted it, and took it, together with the French Academy, under his protection, I mean Chancellor Seguier *. He is remembered as one of the greatest magistrates which France ever bred since it has been a nation: he has left it doubtful in which he most excelled, whether in polite learning or business. It is a truth of universal consent, that he sur-

* This Chancellor succeeded Richlieu in the Protectorship of the Academy. He was a particular friend to M. la Chambre, (the Abbot's father), and retained him in his family, as his physician, many years.

passed all of his time in both those qualifications; grave and familiar, deep in his deliberations, yet affable and easy of access. He had naturally what so many others would, but cannot, acquire; what is not gained by study or imitated by affectation, what is quite another thing than sententious phrases or a solemn utterance; what is scarcer than learning, or, perhaps, than probity, I mean Dignity; which he did not owe to the eminence of his post; on the contrary, he ennobled that; he was great and authoritative out of the ministry, nor has it appeared that those who had the skill to unite every thing in their persons could eclipse him.

It is now some years ago since you lost that great Protector; you cast your eyes around you; you weighed in the balance all who offered themselves; but such was the sense of your loss, that, in your efforts to repair it, you raised your thoughts to him who alone could cause you to forget it, and make it terminate to your glory. With what goodness, with what humanity, did our magnanimous Monarch receive you! Nor is it strange he should; it is his innate character; the very same character, Gentlemen, which shines forth in all the actions of his illustrious life; but which the surprising revolutions that have happened in a neighbouring kingdom, an ally of France, have set in the fairest light it could possibly receive.

How easily do we lose the sense and memory of things which made the strongest impression upon us! Let us call to mind those tempestu-

ous days of anxiety and trouble, uncertain what might have befallen a great king *, a great queen, the prince their son, an august but unhappy family, who were driven by their piety and religion to the severest trials of adversity. Alas ! whether they were lost at sea, or fell by the hands of their enemies, we knew not. We asked one another, we promised each other reciprocally to communicate the first news relating to such a lamentable event. It was no longer a public but a family affair ; it interrupted our sleep ; we waked each other to tell any news we had heard. And when those royal persons, for whom we had been so much concerned, had at length escaped the dangers of the sea and their own country, was there not wanting a foreign land of refuge ? a king, equally generous and powerful, who both could and would receive them ? I saw that reception, a moving spectacle, if ever there was one ! Every eye burst into tears of joy and admiration : our Monarch never looked more graceful, no, not at the head of his armies, when he thunders upon a town which resists him, or when he dissipates his enemies' troops with only a rumour of his approach.

His end in this long war, doubt not, is to give us a happy peace, settled on conditions entirely reasonable, and for the honour of the nation, which may for ever put it out of the enemies' power to disturb us by new hostilities.

Let others publish abroad, and celebrate what

* The welfare of Britain required that expulsion.

this great king has executed, either by himself or his generals, during the course of these commotions, which have shaken all Europe: they have a vast field, and a subject which will exercise them for a long time. Let others prophesy, if they can, what he intends to perform this campaign; I only speak of his heart, of the rectitude and greatness of his purposes; they are known to every body; his generous warmth cannot conceal itself. When complimented upon the titles of honour with which he has just now gratified some grandees of his state, what says he to this? That he cannot be contented whilst all are not so, and that it is impossible for him to do for every person as he would. He knows, Gentlemen, that it is the fortune of a king to take towns, to win battles, to enlarge his frontiers, to be dreaded by his enemies; but that the glory of a sovereign consists in being beloved by his people, in having their hearts, and, consequently, all their possessions. Ye remote, ye neighbouring countries! behold this humane and beneficent prince, whom the painters and statuaries only disfigure, he reaches out his arms to you, looks upon you with eyes of affection and sweetness; it is his peculiar attitude: he is desirous to see your inhabitants, your shepherds, dancing to the pipe under the willows and poplars, in concert with their rustic voices, singing loyal songs in praise of him, who, together with peace, and the fruits of peace, shall have restored joy and festivity among them.

It is to attain the height of his wishes, namely, the common felicity, that he gives himself up to the toils and dangers of an obstinate war, that he undergoes the inclemency of the seasons, that he exposes his person, that he hazards a life distinguished for happiness and splendour. This is his secret, these his views; they are known, they are evident from the very qualities of those who are in place, and who aid him with their counsels. I spare their modesty. Let them only suffer me to observe, that if there is no guessing at the projects of this wise prince, the public guesses at, and even nominates, the persons he is going to prefer, and that his majesty does only confirm the voice of the people in the choice of his ministers. He does not entirely transfer the weight of affairs upon them, himself being, if I may so say, his own prime minister; ever studious to relieve his people's necessities, he enjoys no respite, no hours of relaxation: it is now night-fall, the guards are posted, the stars are glittering in the heavens, and performing their revolutions; all nature is at rest, deprived of day, buried in somniferous darkness; we too are at rest; while the king alone, retired within his cabinet, watches over us, and over his whole dominions: such, Gentlemen, is the protector you have obtained, even the protector of his people.

You have admitted me into a Society illustrated by so high a protection: I do not dissemble; my value for this distinction was such that I desired to have it in all its untainted

bloom and purity; I mean, that I might owe it to your choice alone: and such is my veneration for this choice, that I did not dare to wound or even glance at its freedom by any importunate solicitation of my own. I had, beside, a just diffidence of myself; I felt a repugnance to ask a preference to others who were capable of being chosen. I had a surmise, Gentlemen, which carried with it the greatest probability, I mean, that your inclinations turned elsewhere upon a worthy subject, upon a man of virtue, wit, and knowledge, who was so before the place of trust which he possesses was conferred upon him, and would be so though he were to enjoy it no longer. I am very sensibly touched, not with the deference, (because I know how much of that I owe him), but with the friendship, he showed me, even to the forgetting himself in my behalf. A father leads his son to a show; there is such a resort that the door is quite blocked up; he is tall and robust; he clears his way through the crowd, and, just as he is entering, he puts his little son before him, who otherwise must not have got in at all, or at least very late. This step, which my honoured friend took, in desiring some of you to give your votes for me, which so justly belonged to him, is perfectly new and singular in its circumstances; but yet does not at all lessen my obligations to you, since nothing but your suffrages, always free and independent, can bestow a seat in the French Academy. This you have granted me,

238 *A Speech to the French Academy.*

Gentlemen, and with so good a grace, with so unanimous a concurrence, that I owe it to, and will hold it by, no other tenure but that of your good pleasure ! In me was no high post, no interest, no riches, no titles or authority, which could incline you to make this choice ; none of these meet in me, I want every thing. A Book * which met with some success for its singularity, and of which the false, I say, false and malicious applications might have done me a prejudice with persons of less equity and penetration than yourselves, was all the mediation I made use of, and which you accepted. How then can I ever repent of being an author !

* His Book of Characters.

OF THE
MANNER OF LIVING
WITH
G R E A T M E N.

Written after the Method of
M. DE LA BRUYERE.

By the late N. ROWE, Esq.

MANHATTAN

OF GREAT MEN

THEIR ABILITY

IN THE FUTURE

OF THE
MANNER OF LIVING
WITH
GREAT MEN.

DISTINCTION of rank is highly necessary for the economy of the world, and was never called in question but by barbarians and enthusiasts.

A just consideration for the several degrees of men, as the orders of Providence have placed them above us, is useful, not only to the correcting of our manners and keeping our common conversation in the bounds of politeness and civility, but has even a better consequence, in disposing the mind to a religious humility.

In observing, step by step, the several degrees of excellency above us, we arrive insensibly, at last, to the contemplation of the supreme perfection.

It has been said, that inequality of condition is a bar to friendship; but why? are not the links of a chain continued as well perpendicularly as horizontally?

Most men are, indeed, rather inclined to live on the terms of civility than friendship; it is sufficient for their interest to have no enemies, and they find it for their ease to have no obligations without doors, that is, out of themselves.

There are some people that naturally love to do good, and contribute to the happiness of their fellow-creatures; but how rare?

If there cannot be what is called Friendship between a great and a private man, there may be something almost equivalent to it, while there is beneficence on one part, and gratitude on the other.

Crito must be a miserable man, who never was known to have a friend, even among men of his own degree. He is rich, he is great, he has wit; any of these three qualities would have got another man either friends or followers. He has not good nature.

Paulinus is affable, just to his word, generous, serviceable: he has no enemies but those that are so to virtue and to their country; he has friends amongst those of his own rank, and followers amongst his inferiors, that take a pleasure in his protection. He has good nature.

A great man, who has a delicate understanding, cannot find a sufficient number for his conversation among those of his own quality.

Aristus is a great genius for politics, and he finds, amongst the ministry, heads capable of forming the greatest and wisest designs. It

is with them he concerts what is for the advantage of his prince and country. But he has a taste for music, painting, and sculpture; he is perfectly a master of all the fine parts of learning. He chuses to spend whole days with Lycidas, a man not of his own quality, but one to whom Nature and Industry have given what they could give.

Lycidas was born with great advantages for knowledge; he has improved those advantages; he has a wit admirably well turned; a sound and exact judgment; he thinks, speaks, and writes, with the utmost politeness; and with all these, he has so much gentleness in nature, and sweetness in his manners, that one should love him though it were possible he might be a fool. In short, it is necessary to a great man that would be completely happy to have such a friend or companion, call it which you will.

Going into the company of great men is like going into the other world; you ought to stay till you are called.

What impatience have some people to press into conversations, where it is impossible they should be easy!

Bupalus was never cut out for a courtier; why will he always be making parties to dine with great lords?

Bupalus might have lived well with any sort of people, bating lords. He has a pleasant wit; he has humour, and is very often agreeable in his conversation; but then he is vari-

able; he has loved and hated all his acquaintance round. He is violent, a great stranger to patience, and a mortal enemy to contradiction. He would have made a notable tyrant, and flatterers would have had a good time of it in his reign.

If I consider my own interest, what have I to do with people who take it to be their privilege and birthright to insult me?

What slavery is it to a ridiculous vanity to hunt after the conversation of insolent greatness! What peace, what ease, what happiness, does a man forego, who might be used as he pleases amongst his equals, and yet chuses to put himself upon the rack to make a lord laugh!

Great men expect the lesser people should have the complaisance for them to be of their opinion, or at least that those who depend upon them should submit blindly to their notions of right and wrong; this is a privilege we do not allow the priesthood themselves, and yet they derive their authority from the Highest.

We allow there is a true reason of state, and a true religion to be followed; but neither all priests nor all statesmen have right notions of them. They would have the world of the same opinion with the man in Horace:

Nam te
Scire, Deos quoniam propius contingis, oportet.

But we have an unlucky proverb against them in English ;

The nearer the Church (or Court) the further from God, and (it may be) the Prince's service.

Common decency and good manners require a deference to our superiors ; and if they have something in them insufferable, we may avoid coming where they are.

If one cannot bear the chattering of Babylas, his insipid gaiety, his perpetual ado with his family, his history of their particular honours, his peevishness, his intrigues, and his raillery ; there is one easy remedy, shun him ; the world is wide enough.

The ambition of being intimate with our betters runs through the most weak understandings of all ranks.

Go down in a stagecoach with a parson's wife, she tells you of all the sirs and the ladies in her country ; " How often she goes to see them,—that they are continually sending for her,—how they breed their sons—and what they give their daughters : but my Lord Bishop's lady does not live if she is not once a week at—and one odd thing, which you, may be, will hardly believe, he never went to the assizes without her."

So the he and she citizen, with my Lord Mayor's cousin, my Lord Mayor's cousin's cousin, &c.

Beneficence seems to be so inseparable from

true greatness, that one might, not unaptly, define it a large power of doing good ; and if the will is not inclined to the exercise of that power, it had as good not be as not to be put to its proper use.

Why should any one be called a Great Man who is rarely serviceable to others, who seldom does good to the unworthy ? But the world imposes upon him and themselves too ; they call him a Great Man, and he is not so.

Necessity makes some people bow ; and fear makes most people stand at a distance and say nothing.

The excesses and vices of Great Men set fatal and ruinous examples to their inferiors, and one might wish upon this occasion that their acquaintance and conversations were confined to one another.

Cleon is noble, has a vast estate, and great employments ; he builds, buys pictures, fine furniture ; he plays deep, keeps horses, and lives magnificently ; he leaves a plentiful fortune and an easy family behind him.

Dorilas is a private man, of a free and independent condition ; he lives like Cleon, he mortgages his estate, he becomes a slave, he depends upon others, he is undone ; his posterity curse him.

Great Men have many things which attract first our admiration, and then our affections ; and some people live safely and pleasantly with them : but those who never converse with them

are exempt from the power of many passions, and are free from the pains of many afflictions.

All human Greatness had a beginning; it has sometimes been founded upon honesty. If I am charmed with it, why should I not rather attempt to be one of those Great Ones, whose condition I so much admire, than be contented with a second place, a dependence upon them?

There is a virtuous as well as a vicious desire of Greatness.

THE END.



